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SPECIAL AND CHOSEN SERMONS OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, COLLECTED OVT OF HIS writings and preachings for the neceſſary inſtruction and edification of ſuch, as hunger and ſeeke after the perfect knowledge and ineſtimable glorie which is in Chriſt Ieſu, to the comfort and ſaluation of their ſoules.

Engliſhed by VV. G.

Philip. 3. 8. 9.

I thinke all thinges but loſſe for the excellencie of the knowledge of Chriſt Ieſus my Lord, for whom I haue counted all thinges loſſe, and doe iudge them but vile, that I may winne Chriſt, and be found in him, not hauing myne owne righteouſnes, which is of the lawe, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, euen the righteouſnes which is of God through faith.

Imprinted at London by Thomas Vautroullier dwelling in the Blacke Friers by Ludgate.

CVM PRIVILEGIO.

1578.

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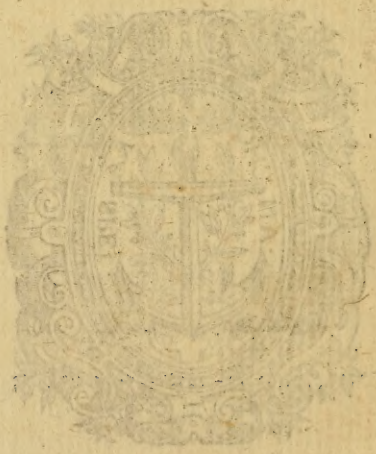

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TO

TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFVLL SYR THOMAS HENNEAGE KNIGHT, TREASVRER OF HER MAIESTIES priuie chamber, VV. GACE wisheth peace and ſaluation in Chriſt.

CONſydering (right VVorshipfull) that ſaying of Dauid alleaged by the Apoſtle Paul, that there is none that vnderſtandeth, none that ſeeketh after God, that all are gone out of the vvay and become vnprofitable: me thinkes it doth liuely ſet forth the blindneſſe of mans vnderſtanding, the vvickedneſſe of his vvill, and his peruerſnes and vnhabilitie vnto that vvhich is good. VVhereof if vve had not many teſtimonies of Scripture, yet common experience vvere able to confirme the ſame, vvhen vve daily ſee men ſo carefull to liue, and ſo careleſſe to liue vvell. Hovvbeit this is no meruell: for as a tree vvhoſe roote is rotten and infected vvith venimous ſappe, bringeth forth none but corrupt and naughty frute: ſo from mans hart vvhich is corrupt and infected vvith the venim of ſinne, can proceede nothing that is good.

Novv mans vnderſtanding being blinde, he is not able of him ſelfe to attaine to the knovvledge of God, and conſequently vvithout ſome other meanes or helpe can not be ſaued: for this, as our Sauiour in the Goſpell ſayth, is life euerlaſting, to knovv one onely true God, and him vvhom he hath ſent Ieſus Chriſt. Againe, mans vvill being corrupt, he is not

able to ſerue God as his dutie requireth, as to honour him as his Lord, to obey him as his father, to truſt in him as his Protector and preſeruer, to be thankefull to him for his infinite benefites, &c. VVherefore leſte man being ignorant of God should be excluded from ſaluation, or leſt through the vvickednes of his vvill and inclination to euill, he should dishonour ſo high a Lord, diſobey ſo good a father, diſtruſt ſo carefull a preſeruer, and be vnthankefull to ſo gracious a giuer, vvho doth not ſee hovv requiſite and needefull it is, that he should by good inſtructions be brought to the knovvledge of the Lorde God, and by godly exhortations and admonitions be reclaimed from his vvicked vvayes to the performance of his dutie? Novv foraſmuch as God hath in his vvord reuealed ſo much of him ſelfe as is expedient for man to knovv, & hath therein alſo preſcribed that maner of ſeruing him vvhereof he accepteth, man muſt out of it learne the true knovvledge and right ſeruice of God, and therefore moſt neceſſary it is that this vvord be preached & taught, that therby man may learne to knovv God, and truely to vvorship & ſerue him being knovvne. So ſhall his minde be enlightened vvith diuine knovvledge, and his vvill reformed according to Gods vvil, ſo ſhall this vvord be a lanterne vnto his feete, and a light vnto his paths, vvhereby he may be directed in al his vvayes. But (alas) this is a thing to be lamented, that the harueſt is great, but the labourers are fevv. For among them vvhich ſupply the places of labourers in the Lordes harueſt, ſome there be vvho doe vvith diligence diſcharge their dutie, many moe there are, vvho albeit they be able, yet doe eyther quite neglect it, or very ſclederly execute it, but greateſt is the number of them, vvho for lacke of ſkil & knovvledge are not able at all to performe it. VVherefore there is great necde to pray the Lord of the harueſt, that he vvill ſend forth labourers into his harueſt, vvhereby many moe then doe may receiue the Goſpell of Chriſt Ieſus euen to the ſaluation of

their

their ſoules.

The premiſſes vvell vveyed, I thinke (right VVorshipfull) there may a ſufficient reaſon be gathered, vvhy I did purpoſe the publishing of theſe Sermons of D. Martin Luther in our vulgar tongue, and vvhy at the laſt I haue by ſome labour and paynes brought the ſayd purpoſed publishing to paſſe. I vvas in deede at the firſt procured thereunto by a learned Father of this lande, vvhoſe vvordes and iudgement I make no ſmall account of, but aftervvard entring into deeper conſideration of the matter, and vveying on the one ſide the great ignorance of many euen in matters of ſaluation, togither vvith the dayly dishonouring of God by vngodly life: and on the other ſide the diuine doctrine and moſt vvholſom exhortations vvhich theſe Sermons conteine, I vvas more forcibly ſtirred vp thereunto, and thought that the painefull peruſing of them, and frutefull follovving of that vvhereof they entreat, vvould be a ſouereigne ſalue to help to cure ſuch daungerous diſeaſes. For by them may they learne to knovv one onely true God, and vvhom he hath ſent Ieſus Chriſt, and the infinit riches vvhich are compriſed in him, and offered vnto vs through him of God his Father: that he humbled him ſelfe to exalt vs, that he became a ſeruaunt to ſet vs at libertie, that he vvas empouerished to make vs rich, that he dyed for our ſinnes, & roſe again for our iuſtification, that through his meanes mercie hath ſvvallovved vp miſerie, and bounty hath ouercome all euill, finally that vvithout him there is no ioy nor conſolation, no peace nor quietnes, no felicitie nor ſaluation, but that he is the onely meanes by vvhich all good thinges are attained: ſo that they vvhich enioy him receiue not one gift alone, as vvith Salomon vviſedom, vvith Samſon ſtrength, vvith Iob patience, vvith Paule zeale, &c: but for pouertie they receiue riches, for vveakenes ſtrength, for folly vviſedom, for ſeruitude freedom, for griefe ioy, for ſinne righteouſnes, for death life, yea all good thinges vvhat-

ſoeuer.

VVherefore if the faithfull man be preſſed vvith pouertie, he may here learne that by Chriſt he is adopted to be the Sonne of God, and ſo may be comforted, ſaying to him ſelfe: Hovv can he be poore vvhich hath God to his Father? vvho both is able to giue all thinges neceſſary, for his is the earth and all that therein is, and alſo vvill giue the ſame, becauſe he is moſt louing and gracious to his children. Againe, if he feele in him ſelfe vveaknes, he may learne here that he is not able of him ſelfe to attaine vnto ſtrength, but that it is the gift of Chriſt, vvho ſtrengtheneth ſuch as beleeue in him, & ſo may be ſtirred vp by harty prayer to aſke the ſame of him, that he vvill vouchſafe by his holy ſpirit to ſtrengthen and confirme him, that he may be able to performe that by grace, vvhich by nature and of him ſelfe he ſhall neuer be able to doe: as mightely to ſubdue the rebellious flesh, ſtrongly to reſiſt, and at the laſt valiauntly to ouercome the tentations of Satan, patiently to beare the troubles of the vvorld, and conſtantly to contemne the allurements of the ſame. Moreouer, if he thirſt after diuine and heauenly vviſedom, (vvhich is to knovv God aright, and thoſe thinges that are neceſſary to be knovvne to the attaining of ſaluation) he may finde here largely and liuely ſet forth, that Chriſt came his Fathers Embaſſadour and Meſſenger to men, that by him they might be brought to the right knovvledge of God, and into all truth, ſo that by him vve are enlightened vvith the knovvledge of God, by him vve are inſtructed in all truth, and conſequently by him vve obtaine diuine and heauenly vviſedom. Here alſo ſhall he learne that Chriſt vvas made vnder the lavve, that he might redeeme them vvhich vvere in bondage vnder the lavve, & of ſeruile bondmen make them free ſonnes, euen the children of God.

Furthermore, if griefe and heauines come vpon him, he is here taught vvhere true ioy may be had, euen in Chriſt

Ieſus

Ieſus alone, that in him onely he may fynde ſure comfort, ſouereigne medicines, preſent remedie, true ioy of heart and quietnes of conſcience. Finally, vvhereas vve are ſynnefull, and haue by our ſynnes iuſtly deſerued Gods eternall vvrath and moſt heauie vengeance, he ſhall here learne that Chriſt hath payed the ranſome for our ſynnes, and pacified Gods moſt grieuous vvrath and diſpleaſure iuſtly conceiued againſt vs. And becauſe it is not ſufficient that due ſatisfaction be made for ſynnes, and Gods vvrath appeaſed, but vve muſt alſo appeare righteous before God, it is here shevved, that as by one mans diſobedience many vvere made ſynners, ſo by the obedience of one, namely of Ieſus Chriſt, as many as beleeue in him ſhalbe made righteous, inaſmuch as his righteouſnes is imputed to them as their ovvne, vvhereby they appeare perfectly righteous before God, and are accepted of him: ſo that vvhereas they had of themſelues deſerued eternall death, they are through Chriſt accounted vvorthie of euerlaſting life. But vvhat doe I goe about to rehearſe the infinite treaſures vvhich the faithfull enioy through Chriſt? it ſhall be ſufficient to conclude vvith the Apoſtle Paule, and ſay: If God ſpared not his ovvne Sonne, but gaue him for vs all to death, hovv ſhall he not vvith him giue vs all thinges alſo?

Novv foraſmuch as theſe thinges, and the right meanes to attaine vnto them, are in theſe Sermons of that moſt learned Diuine Martin Luther moſt learnedly, yea euen diuinely ſet forth, they may vndoutedly be a ſingular meane, not onely to inſtruct them vvhich be ignorant in matters of ſaluation, but alſo to increaſe and confirme the knovvledge of ſuch, as haue already vvell profited in Chriſtian religion. Hovvbeit there is annexed hereunto ſound and abſolute doctrine concerning good vvorkes and godly conuerſation, as being moſt neceſſary to be of all Chriſtians perfectly knovvne, and effectually followved. For Chriſtians through Chriſt being become the Sonnes of God, hovv vnmeete, yea hovv

abhominable a thinge is it that they should reſemble Satan in their doinges? being nouv made the members of Chriſt, houv deteſtable a thing is it that they should be inſtruments of iniquitie? being nouv the temple of the holy Ghoſt, houv beaſtly a thinge vvere it to defyle the ſame vvith the filthines of ſynne? Finally hauing receiued ſo many and ſo great benefites of God through Chriſt, houv vvicked and shamefull a thinge should it be, to be vnthankefull to ſo gracious a God, to be diſobedient to ſo louing a Father, in any vviſe to diſpleaſe ſo mercifull a Sauiour? But it shalbe needeleſſe much to ſtand vpon this point, ſeeing it is not vnknouvne to the faithfull vvith houv great endeuour they ought to auoyde that vvhich is euill, and embrace that vvhich is good, and therefore shall ſyncere & perfect doctrine concerning good vvorkes be vnto them no leſſe commodious and profitable, then needefull and neceſſarie.

For the cauſes aboue ſpecified eſpecially among other, I haue (right VVorshipfull) though not finely, yet faithfully tranſlated theſe Sermons into our vulgar tounge, and haue done myne endeuour for the publishing of the ſame, vvhich I doe humbly dedicate to your VVorships protection, by your zealous godlines and godly zeale chiefly moued thereunto, vvhereby I am induced to thinke that you vvill vvell accept of them. For as the godly do vvith Dauid delight in the Arke of the Couenant, in the Tabernacle of the Lord, in the holy Mount Sion, that is, in the Church of God: ſo doe they vvith the ſame Dauid deſyre the building of this houſe of God, the florishing of this vine, the peace and proſperitie of this heauenly Ieruſalem, and therefore that vvhich is a meane and furtherance hereunto they doe not onely loue and like, but alſo hiely eſteeme, and hartily praye for. VVherefore (right VVorshipfull) I thinke it altogether ſuperfluous to goe about vvith vvordes to procure your vvell liking and accepting of theſe Sermons, foraſmuch as they tend onely to this

this ende, that the Church of God may by them be edified; as in the premisses is of me declared. Whereas in translating them I haue vsed a plaine kynde of stile (yet such as sufficiently expresseth the meaning of the author) and not studied for curious vvordes & eloquēt phrases, the cause thereof is, for that I preferre plainnesse vvith profit, before much curiositie vvith smaller commoditie, so that I nothinge at all feare that in this respect they shalbe misliked of the godly, vvhose misliking onely I endeuour to auoide.

Thus (as it seemes vnto me) hauing intreated sufficiently of those thinges vvhich I thought pertinent to my present purpose, I doe here conclude, desyring the Lord God, that he vvill by his holy Spirit alvvayes gouerne and direct you in the true obedience of his blessed vvorde, to the glorie of his diuine Name, to the profit of your neighbours, and comfort of your conscience, so shall you assuredly haue prosperous successe in all your affayres, and at the last obtaine euerlasting ioyes and endlesse felicitie, by the onely meanes of Christ Iesus our Sauiour.

Your Worships humbly at commaundement W. Gace.

AN ADMONITION TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

FOR the commendation of this worke, and the Author thereof, there ſhall not neede I truſt at this preſent any great diſcourſe to be made, foraſmuch as ſo many good bookes of the ſame writer be already ſet abroad, whereby may ſufficiently be coniectured what is to be thought of this alſo. Againe becauſe the worke it ſelfe is ſuch, conteining ſuch matter of heauenly conſolation, that without any further commendation of other, it yeldeth cauſe ſufficient to commend it ſelfe. Onely this then remaineth, to intreat and exhort the reader, but to peruſe & reade the ſame, who in ſo doing ſhall fynde I doubt not, neither to lacke great cauſe in vs to ſet forth theſe Sermons, nor leſſe neceſſitie in the readers to beſtow paines in peruſing and reading them, for the dignitie of the matter, and ſingular frute therein to be found. For what more worthie matter can be, thē to ſet forth Chriſt in his right glorie, in his full riches and royall eſtate to the hearts and ſoules of men, eſpecially ſuch as are heauie laden and diſtreſſed in ſpirit? what more comfortable hearinge, or doctrine more true, then of forgiuenes and remiſſion of ſynnes, ſo graciouſly purchaſed, ſo freely offered by our Sauiour, ſo cleerely preached by his miniſters? or what riches more excellent, then faith fixed in Chriſt, and hope ſtabliſhed in the promiſes of life? or what ſtudie more frutefull, then to ſeeke the kingdome of God? For

where the frute of all other ſtudies decayeth and hath his ende, the frute of this ſtudy abydeth for euer. And therefore not without cauſe we be ſo willed by our Sauiour him ſelfe, firſt to ſeeke for this kingdome and righteouſnes thereof, promiſing withall in an other place, that he which ſeeketh ſhall fynde. In the ſeeking of which kingdom two ſpecial notes we haue to learne and ſearch, firſt the glorie & grace of the King, ſecondly the welth and felicitie of the ſubiects. In which two partes as the whole ſumme of all our ſpirituall comfort moſt principally conſiſteth, groũded in the holy Scriptures: ſo of all expoſitors of the ſame Scriptures, I know none or fewe, in theſe our dayes, more liuely to open theſe comforts vnto vs out of Gods worde, then this Doctor and Preacher of theſe Sermõs here following: which as he hath done moſt effectually firſt in his owne tounge to his contrypeople, then in Latin to the learned: ſo this tranſlator hath no leſſe plainly and faithfully engliſhed the ſame for the commoditie and vſe of our contryfolke of England. By whoſe meanes and induſtrie this vantage we haue now gayned, that we haue gotten vnto vs one good preacher in England more then we had before, to the comfort and edification of all ſuch as be diſpoſed to read and learne. So that in ſuch townes and villages, wherein before were mute miniſters, κωφὰ πρόσωπα, this Preacher now may ſupplie the lacke, and there be receiued as their perſon, if they pleaſe, preaching now in their owne ſpeech vnto them, and putting them to no charges of any tythes. And in other places where more plentie of learned teachers is, yet notwithſtanding no hurt ſhall come to admit this ſtranger as a coadiutor, or felowhelper vnto them. Whereby I nothing dout, but in ſo doing, all ſuch as ſhalbe willing to giue eare to this Preacher, as well they

that

that be learned, ſhall fynde wherein to growe in more perfection, as alſo the vnlearned wherein to be inſtructed ſufficiently to their ſoules helth in Chriſt Ieſu. In whom I wiſh to thee and to all true Chriſtian readers all ſpirituall grace and heauenly wiſedom, to bleſſe thy ſtudies, to proſper thy labours, to ſtabliſh thy faith, to multiplie thy conſolations, to direct thy wayes, and finally to glorifie thee both body and ſoule in his bleſſed kingdome for euer. Amen.

J. Fox.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, OF THE NATIVITIE OF CHRIST.

Luke 2.

Verſe. 1. AND it came to paſſe in thoſe daies, that there came a decree from Auguſtus Cęſar, that all the world ſhould be taxed.

2. (This firſte taxing was made, when Cyrenius was gouernour of Syria.)

3. Therefore went all to be taxed euery man to his owne citie.

4. And Ioſeph alſo went vp from Galile out of a citie called Nazareth, into Iudea, vnto the citie of Dauid, which is called Bethlehem (becauſe he was of the houſe and linage of Dauid,)

5. To be taxed with Marie, that was giuen him to wife, which was with childe.

6. And ſo it was, that while they were there, the dayes were accompliſhed that ſhe ſhoulde be deliuered,

7. And ſhe brought forth her firſt begotte ſonne, and wrapped him in ſwadling clothes, & layed him in a manger, becauſe there was no roome for them in the Inne.

8. And there were in the ſame countrey ſhepe-

heards, abiding in the field, and watching their flocke by night.

9. And loe, the Angell of the Lord came vppon them, and the glory of the Lorde shone about them, and they were sore afrayd.

10. Then the Angel sayd vnto them, Be not afraid: for beholde, I bring you glad tydinges of great ioy, that shall be to all people.

11. That is, that vnto you is borne this day in the citie of Dauid, a Sauiour, which is Christ the Lord.

12. And this shall be a signe to you: ye shall finde the babe swadled and layd in a maunger.

13. And straight way there was with the Angell a multitude of heauenly souldiers praysing God, and saying:

14. Glorie be to God on high, and peace in earth, and towards men good will.

The summe of this text.

1 *Whereas the Euangelist here describeth the time and place of the natiuitie of Christ, first herein is required faith of vs, to witte, that we beleue this to be the same Christ, of whom these things be recorded. Moreouer, the house and stocke of Dauid is here notified and shewed forth, whereof our Messias should rise.*

2 *The shepeheardes which are here mentioned, are the firste frutes of those Iewes, which come vnto Christ, as the Wisemen from the East are the first frutes of the Gentiles, and the innocent infants of all them, which must beare the crosse for Christes sake.*

3 *Whereas the Angel of the Lord appeareth to the shepeheards in great glory, it signifieth, that the Gospell commeth vnto men with the glory of God. First in deede it maketh vs afraide, for it condemneth our darkenes and what soeuer is in vs, vntill we heare the comfort, which is here declared vnto the shepeheards in these comfort-*

ble

ble wordes: Be not afraide, behold, I bring you tidinges of great ioy, which shall be to all people, because vnto you is borne this day a Sauiour, which is Christ the Lord.

4 *Moreouer, whereas one Angell first preacheth vnto the shepeheards, that noteth to vs the Prince of all preachers Christ him selfe. Secondly, whereas many Angells are gathered together, it signifieth the multitude of preachers, who all say with one mouth: Glorye be to God, and peace vnto men.*

5 *The frute and profit wherefore Christ tooke flesh vpon him, is here expressed to be Euangelicall peace & good will to men, whereof the hymne of the Angells maketh mention:* Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, good will towards men.

The exposition of the text.

WE haue often tymes heard this history before, and must heare it still both this yeare, and euery yeare, though to sluggish & drousie Christians, that are soone weary and cloyed with good things, the same peraduenture may seeme tedious. But to them that are endued with true faith, it alwaies commeth againe as newe. For the holy Ghost can speake so diuerslye of one thing, that to them which be his, it alwayes seemeth newe. Moreouer we might speake at large of this history, for it is very full of matter, if we shoulde not want tyme, and if it were not perillous least we shoulde somewhere straye from the purpose: Neuertheles we will entreate somewhat thereof, as God shall permit. We haue already heard in the text, how the Angell him selfe expresseth all this history, giuing vs to vnderstand, that the same is published for our cause: and that the frute thereof doth redounde and appertaine to vs onely, and is wrought to our saluation. And therefore the Angell speaking to the shepeheards, sayth in these wordes: Be not afraide, behold, I bringe you tydings of great ioy which shall be vnto all people, that is, that vnto you is borne this day in the city of Dauid a Sauiour, which

Christ came not for his owne cause, but to worke our saluation

is Christ the Lorde. Here is declared first, that his natiuitie doth pertaine vnto vs, when he sayth: vnto you is borne a Sauiour. For the Lord Christ came not for his owne cause onely, but that he might helpe and succour vs. Wherefore let vs most diligently endeuour, that we beleue the Angell, and we shall enioy the whole benefit. I haue heretofore oftentymes sayd, that the Gospell preacheth nothing else but faith, that the Angell also here doth, and this must all preachers doe, otherwise they be not true ministers. For the Angell was here a beginning and example to all preachers. Now we must in this place speake of a double natiuitie, namely of our owne and of Christes. But before I begin to entreat hereof, I will handle the history briefly, that ye may lay it vp in your hart, and may be partakers of the ioy which the Angell here bringeth. First therefore the Euangelist sayth:

And it came to passe in those dayes, that there came a decree from Augustus Cæsar, that all the world should be taxed. This first taxing was made when Cyrenius was gouernour of Syria. Therefore went all to be taxed euery man to his owne citie.

The time of ỹ comming of the Messias foretold by the Patriarch Iacob. *Gen.*49.10.

Ye know right wel, that the Iewes had a promise made of the Patriarch Iacob, that a Prince, lawgiuer or ruler, of the house of Iuda, should not be wanting in Iudea, vntil the Messias which was promised them did come. For the wordes of Iacob to Iuda are playne after this sort: The scepter shall not depart from Iuda, & a lawgiuer from betwene his feete, vntill Silo come. Now at this time the case was so, that the Romanes possessed Iudea, and had set a Liuetenant ouer it, whom the Euangelist here calleth Cyrenius. The Iewes before for a long tyme had vsed priestes for Kinges, when as the Machabees had obtayned the kingdom, so that the dominion of the house of Iuda was already taken away and suppressed, neither was there any Prince or ruler, of the stocke and blood of Iuda, gouernour ouer the people. But that Christ or the Messias shoulde nowe come, that was a great signe, that the prophecie at that tyme especially might be fulfilled. Wherefore the Euangelist sayth here, that at the tyme when Christ was borne, Augustus Cesar had set a Liuetenaunt ouer Iudea, vnder whom the Iewes should offer them selues to be taxed. As if he sayd: Euen at that tyme at which he should be borne, he is borne. All that liued vnder the Romane Emperour were

were compelled to pay taxe, for a testimonie that they were subiect vnto him. This the Iewes knew, but they did not vnderstand the Prophecie. Iacob had sayd thus: The scepter shal not depart from Iuda, and a lawgiuer from betwene his feete, vntill Silo come: That is, a Prince and ruler of the flocke of Iuda shall not be wanting in Iudea, vntil Christ come. Iacob did sufficienely shewe in these wordes, that he should be wanting at the comming of Christ. Moreouer, whereas they vnderstood it so, as though such a Silo shoulde come, as shoulde beare rule with the swoord, it is a false vnderstanding thereof, neither can it be gathered out of that text. For he sayth thus, that at the comming of Christ the temporall kingdome of the Iewes shoulde ende. So Luke also here sheweth that very time, when it behoued this to be done. It followeth moreouer in the text:

The Iewes misinterpret the prophecie of Iacob concerning the cóming of the Messias.

And Ioseph also went vp from Galile out of a citie called Nazareth, into Iudea, vnto the citie of Dauid, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and linage of Dauid) to be taxed with Marie that was giuen him to wife, which was vvith childe.

Ioseph also and Marie obeyed this commaundement of Cesar, and submitted them selues as other honest and obedient men, and went to Bethlehem, which was the chiefe and head citie of the house of Iuda, and suffered them selues to be taxed. Marie, inasmuch as she was with child, & neare her deliuerie, might haue excused her selfe, that she should not take this iorney vpon her, but she doth not so, they will not be an offence to others. Moreouer it ought thus to be that they should come to Bethlehem, because of the prophecie of the Prophet Micheas chap. 5. which foretolde that Christ shoulde be borne in Bethlehem of Iuda. Marke I pray you, how that taxe must serue hereunto, which neither Cesar nor his Lieuetenant did knowe. Thus God dealeth in his workes, in which he vseth the meanes of heathen and euill men, whereby he may make vs, which are miserable & wretched men, and so deepely drowned in flesh and blood, certaine of our faith, which the Euangelist Luke here specially setteth forth, inasmuch as he ectsoones declareth in the historie, the places and times, least that we should be deceiued concerning this Christ. The maner of his birth the Euangelist sheweth moreouer, saying:

And so it was, that while they were there, the dayes were accomplished, that she should be deliuered: and she brought forth her first begotten sonne, and wrapped him in swadling clothes, & layd him in a manger, because there was no roome for them in the Inne.

Let it nothing moue vs, or be any offence vnto vs, that the Lorde commeth into the worlde in so great pouertie and miserie. For it ought to be a great ioy and comfort vnto vs, rather then in any wise to discomfort & discourage vs. It may seeme a straunge thing, and hard and strait dealing, that a Virgin which was new maried, and that peare iopned to her husband, might not be permitted to bring forth her childe at Nazareth in her owne house, but was enforced in poore estate to goe almost three daies iorney being great with child? And when she came at her iorneyes end, she had not so much place in the Inne, as that she might be deliuered in some parlour or chamber. The Inne being full, there was none that would vouchsafe to giue place to this woman being great with childe, that she might haue the vse of their chamber, but she was enforced to go into a stable, that there she might bring forth the Creator of all creatures. Here may be plainly perceiued what is the knowledge and wisedom of the worlde concerning diuine matters, namely, that it is blinde, and vaine in vnderstanding, that it seeth not the works of God, and if it be so that it seeth them, that it knoweth not what they meane.

Comfort against worldly miserie & contempt.

Hereof let vs learne, not to be moued or discouraged, if we be poore and miserable, and forsaken of the worlde, for we haue here great comfort. If Christ the maker of all thinges, with his beloued mother, was cast into so great miserie, and so contemned of the worlde, why may not the same also come vnto vs? or why should not we being in miserie, and compassed about with all calamities, beare them patiently, yea if God will at any time kill vs with aduersitie and distres? But this thing is to be lamented, that we doe exclude such an example from our eyes, but much farther from our hart. We should easily suffer aduersitie and contempt, if so be that we beleued, and had a sure trust and confidence in God, when as we see that the Lord Christ suffered this miserie, pouertie, and calamitie. Wherefore this is first throughly to

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be marked and considered of vs, how Christ came into the worlde in so great powertie, and found not so much as one in so great a citie, which was dutifull and beneficial toward him. Thus this natiuitie was receiued in the earth, ouer which notwithstanding all the heauenly souldiers did exceedingly reioyce, as it followeth:

And there were in the same contrey shepeheards, abiding in the field, and watching their flocke by night. And loe, the Angel of the Lorde came vpon them, and the glory of the Lorde shone about them, and they were sore afraide.

How God setteth forth the natiuitie of his sonne.

Here is declared, how God in heauen setteth forth this natiuitie, which the worlde contemneth, yea knoweth not, neither seeth. This ioy is so great in heauen, that it can not be contained therein, but bursteth forth, that it may be declared and communicated to the worlde. For the Angell here bringeth tydings of great ioy to the shepeheardes, which to them is great comfort, which the worlde notwithstanding contemneth and reiecteth, but is of the Angells had in greate admiration, yea and if they might, they would with greater prayses, and more goodly pompe haue sette forth so wonderful a thinge. But it was not meete it should be so. For God would set forth an example in this his Sonne, that the ostētatiō & glorying of the worlde might at the last be neglected, and that it might be knowne what the worlde is. Mans reason semeth alwayes very wise vnto it selfe, it alwayes looketh vnto thinges that are aloft, it considereth onely high matters, it humbleth not it selfe to those thinges that are below. This now is an excellent comfort, that the Angels and all the heauenly souldiers doe esteeme him so much, whom the worlde contemneth, whereby we may learne that albeit we be outcasts in the worlde, there be notwithstanding that haue regard and care of vs. Howbeit we do hardly beleeue this, we doe not fasten our eyes thereupon, but looke vnto great, precious, and high thinges, according to the example of the worlde, and are dismayed, as soone as a litle misfortune commeth, neither thinking nor knowing, if any aduersity assaileth vs, that it is done by the will of God. Beleue thou this vndoutedly, if it had not so pleased God, he would not haue suffered this his beloued sonne to be layd in a manger, he would not haue permitted him to be borne in so great powertie, miserie, and contempt. But the poorer and more despised that he is before the

woꝛld, so much greater care and regard God and all the heauenly souldiers haue of him, so that we may conceiue comfoꝛt hereby, and beleeue assuredly, that the moꝛe we are reiected of the woꝛld, the moꝛe we are esteemed befoꝛe God.

The blind & vaine deuotion of many

Thou mayst finde many which doe here thinke thus, and are touched with such deuotion as this: O, if I had bene there then, with howe great diligence woulde I haue serued this childe and done foꝛ him? yea I woulde haue washed euen his swadling clothes. O, if I had bene so happy as the shepeheards, that I also might haue seene the Lord lying in a maunger. Nowe in deede thou wouldest be ready to doe those duties, when thou knowest Christ to be so high and noble. Surely thou wouldest haue bene as slacke in thy dutie at that time as the Citizens of Bethlehem were. Thou reuoluest in thy mind childish and altogether foolish cogitations. Why doost thou not perfoꝛme the like duties nowe? Behold Christ walking befoꝛe thee in thy neighbour, doo foꝛ him, & bestowe benefits vpon him, whatsoeuer thou shalt bestow vpon thy neighbour which is needy and destitute of helpe, that thou shalt bestow vpon Christ him selfe, as he shall say in the last day to the elect: VVhatsoeuer ye haue done to one of the least of these my brethren, ye haue done it to me. Wherefoꝛe it is a vaine and very foolish thing to admit such childish cogitations. Let vs therefoꝛe at the last open our eyes, let vs not heare examples of so great impoꝛtance in vaine, otherwise the time will come when we shall be grieuously punished. But with what woꝛdes did the Angell speake vnto the shepeheards? the Euangelist sayth after this soꝛt:

Math.25.40

Then the Angell sayd vnto them: Be not afraid: for behold, I bring you glad tidings of great ioy, that shall be to all people, that is, that vnto you is borne this day in the citie of Dauid, a Sauiour, vvhich is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a signe to you: Ye shall find the babe svvadled, and layd in a maunger.

Learne by these woꝛdes of the Angell, how to vse rightly the natiuitie of ꝑ Lord Christ, neither let it suffice you to heare them onely. A great treasure hidden in the earth oꝛ some other where, is to no vse, but if it be opened, and occupied, then is it profitable and precious. Wherefoꝛe giue heede hereunto, that thou mayst vse this natiuitie, otherwise it shal be no commoditie and comfoꝛt

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vnto thee. For whereas thou knowest the bare historie onely, to witte, what came to passe in his natiuitie, and that he was borne needy and poore, thou shalt take no greater commoditie hereby, then if thou heare a historie written of the king of Fraunce, or of some other puissant Prince, whereby no commoditie or comfort should come vnto thee.

But how must we vse this natiuitie rightly and with frute? Euen as I haue sayd, if we be thus perswaded that he was borne for vs, that his natiuitie is ours. Our natiuitie is such, that it altogether aboundeth with sinne, as Dauid sayth Psal. 51: Behold I was shapen in wickednes, & in sinne hath my mother conceiued me. As if he would say: here is nothing but sinne, as well in the conception as in the birth, whatsoeuer I bring with me from my mothers wombe, it is wholly damnable, it is due to death, Satan, & hell. Forasmuch then as our natiuitie, skin & heare are defiled, what good can come therof? This is our title which we haue receiued from Adam, in this one thing we may glory and in nothing else at all, namely, that euery infant that is borne into this world, is wholy in the power of sinne, death, Satan, hel, and eternall damnation: our natiuitie is altogether miserable, and on euery side to be lamented. To deliuer vs from this natiuitie, God sent an other natiuitie, which it behoued to be pure & without all spot, that it might make this vncleane & sinnefull natiuitie pure. This is that natiuitie of the Lorde Christ his onely begotten sonne. Wherefore he woulde not haue him borne of flesh & blood infected with synne, but it behoued that he shoulde be borne of a pure Virgine. He suffered no spot at all or sinne in his flesh, but replenished it with the holy Ghost, & permitted nothing to sticke therein, but those miseries which proceede of flesh and blood, as hunger, thirst, aduersitie, and death, sinne excepted, as the Epistle to the Heb. chap. 4. witnesseth, that he was in all things tempted in like sort, yet without sinne. This is that most excellent thing, which the Lord our God hath done for vs, whereof none taketh any frute, but he that beleeueth. And none will easily beleeue this, but he that feeleth of what sorte his owne natiuitie is. He that hath no feeling of his owne miserie, tasteth not of this natiuitie of Christ. But if we feele our miserie, it followeth forthwith that we cry with the Prophet Dauid and say: Behold I was shapen in wickednes, and in sinne hath my mother conceiued

What it is to vse the natiuitie of christ aright.

Our owne natiuitie of what sort it is.

The natiuitie of Christ.

me: for we feele our sinne and our euill natiuitie.

When death shall come vpon vs, and our heart shalbe touched with anguish & grief, thē at the last it may be, that we would tast of this happy & pure natiuitie, and will exceedingly thirst after it to enioy it. But now when as we feele not our sinnes, neither doe as yet tast of the bitternes of sinne, it slideth coldly to the hart, we heare it in deede, but truely it doth not throughly enter vnto the hart. For if a man did beleue, that this natiuitie was for his commoditie, he would feare neither sinne, nor death. Wherefore I haue sayd that a Christian must beleeue, and dout nothing, that the natiuitie of Christ is as well his, as it is the Lord Christes. And as he hath of the virgin pure blood and flesh, so that he himselfe also is pure, and that this virgin is his mother spiritually, as she was the mother of Christ carnally. Let the hart haue sure confidence in this perswasion, otherwise it will be in an euil case. This the Angell signifieth in these wordes when he sayth: Vnto you he is borne, as if he sayd, what soeuer he is and hath, ye may chalenge it to your selues. Also he is your Sauiour, not that ye should onely looke vppon him, but which is able to deliuer you from the tyrannie of sinne, death, Satan, and all euell: yea and how great soeuer he be, he is borne vnto you, and is yours with all that he hath. Nowe forasmuch as he is myne, and hath chaunged his natiuitie into myne, his flesh & blood also is myne, he himselfe is myne with all wherewith he is endued, so that I dare saye vnto his mother: Beholde, that child which thou hast brought forth, is mine, his flesh and blood are my flesh and blood, yea and thou art my mother, and I will be counted of thee for thy sonne, for whatsoeuer Christ bringeth with him, it must be myne, euen as he himselfe is myne. If so be that his natiuitie be myne, being of a virgin, and without spinne, replenished with the holy Ghost, my natiuitie also must be of a virgin, and pure from spinne.

Christ is borne vnto vs, and is made wholy ours.

Here now Eue the first mother is no more my mother, for it must needes be that that natiuitie doe vtterly die and perish, that there may be no sinne remayning. Here this mother Marie is to be set against that mother, of whome I was borne in sinne. And thus the Angel bringeth with him great ioy, for it can not be, but that the hart should be made glad, when it enioyeth this Sauiour as his owne. When we come to hand strokes, that is, when we

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feele our miſerie and calamitie, there remayneth no comfort or helpe, then my hart can not lift it ſelfe aboue the heauy burden, wherewith it is preſſed downe, but it muſt needes faint and be diſcouraged. But if I conceiue a truſt, and doute nothing that Chriſts natiuitie is mine, that my ſinnes be taken away by him, I become exceding ioyfull, & am confirmed with comfort, whereby all heauines and ſorrow is ſhaken of. This onely is that comfort, and no other, which maketh a good conſcience, which feareth neither death nor hell, for it alwayes reſteth vpon the word of God, which giueth Chriſt vnto vs. Wherefore it is a thinge altogether miſerable and lamentable, if ſuch a good conſcience be ſought in any other thinges then here. Thou ſhalt find no ioy, no peace of conſcience, neither in heauen, nor in earth, but in this Chriſt, be thou certaine and ſure thereof. Wherefore let all other thinges paſſe, and cleaue vnto him onely, if thou deſire to be bold and courageous againſt ſinne, death, the deuill, hell, & all thinges that are againſt thee. He is the Lorde & Sauiour. Ye vnderſtand I truſt, this right wel, foraſmuch as ye haue now heard it ſo oft̄e. But I doe with ſo great earneſtnes as it were beate it into your mindes, that ye may ſee, that there is but one thing taught in the whole Scripture, which I would haue to ſticke firmely and vndoutedly in you, this is that which I haue ſayd, that the vſe of this natiuitie be knowne. True comfort and ioy.

They which ſeeke any other thing, and vſe not this natiuitie, are in a deſperat caſe, as ye haue heard. Which ye haue very wel expreſſed in this ſonge, the author whereof whoſoeuer he was, did nothing erre from the purpoſe, to witte, that the onely childe Chriſt is our comfort. Which wordes ſurely are of very great importance, and deſerue moſt diligently to be weyed. For ye did ſing after this ſort: A child highly to be prayſed is borne vnto vs this day of a chaſt virgin, to the comfort of vs wretches. If that child had not bin borne, we had periſhed all. Is it not ſayd here, that there is no comfort beſide only Chriſt? which in deed is moſt true. Without dout the holy Ghoſt taught him that made this ſong to ſinge after this ſort. If the caſe ſtand thus, it followeth that Monkes, Nunnes, Sacrificing Prieſtes, and all which leaue this child, and ſeeke to come to heauen by other wayes and works, be cōdemned. For ſuch ſay that they neede not this child, otherwiſe they woulde confeſſe, that their owne workes be no-

thing worth. These therefore do nothing but deceiue and seduce, of whom mens harts are procured to depart from Christ, and are led away vnto Satan. In the aforesayd song is contayned moreouer: He is the saluation of vs all, oh sweete Iesu Christ, forasmuch as thou art borne man, defende vs from hell. I greatly desire that ye did well vnderstand this. It is soong abroade euery where, but there is none that throughly beleueth it. Whereupon it commeth that some doe oppugne these things, especially they, which know, sing, and babble very much of them, that truely I feare, that Christ is neuer more blasphemed, then at this feast of his natiuitie, and at other great feastes, that it should be no maruel, if, when he is so blasphemed, he should suffer the whole world to be swallowed vp: but the last day is at hand. Wherefore endeuour that ye may sound this excellent song in your hart, and as ye sing it in mouth, so ye may also beleue it.

No meanes but by Christ to come vnto heauen.

If the case stande thus, that all thinges without this child are vaine, what neede is there then of much busines? why dooste thou runne this way & that way, and endeuorest to do workes, whereby thou mayst prepare thee a seate in heauen? which they especially doe, that murmure vp many Rosaries, and doe continually extoll the mother of God in mouth onely, but in hart thinke more euil of her then of all others: & not onely of her, but of Christ him selfe also the Lord and Sauiour. Wherefore commit this so to memorie, that ye may be certainly perswaded, that whatsoeuer dependeth of any other then of that child, it is all damnable, otherwise the Angell had lyed. This must be compted for most certaine without any addition, neither are these trifles to be weied, to witte, that this sufficeth not that thou dooste beleeue, moe thinges are to be added. Forasmuch then as the Angell sayth, that this child doth all, and that he is the Sauiour, and if he be not, that all labour is lost, tell me, how can it follow, that some thing is to be done of thee, when it is already done before? Dooste thou goe about to doe any thinge that thou mayst obtaine him? That child suffereth not him selfe to be apprehended and obtayned by workes, for albeit thou heape together workes, notwithstanding thou dooste not yet enioy the child. Moreouer thy works be vncleane, by which such a great treasure can not be gotten, no though they were euen holy. But he is to be apprehēded in hart, so that thou beleeue, and say to the Angel: I beleeue that it is true

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which thou sayest, and nothing at all douting I count this childe for a Sauiour borne vnto me. And this part wherof we haue now spoken, pertaineth to faith.

Now we haue here also an other part pertayning to Christian life, namely charitie, that workes may not be reiected. If thou wilt doe workes, doe them not in that respect, that thou perswade thy selfe that thou doost obtayne any thing of God by them. But follow this example: such a one as Christ hath shewed him selfe to thee be thou also towarde thy neighbour. If thou doe more nearely consider the example of Christ, thou shalt finde nothing but meere loue. Whereas he humbleth him selfe and is borne in so great pouertie, that declareth nothing, but loue toward thee, which moued him to become a seruaunt for thy sake, as Paule Philip. 2. sayth, who knew that he might remayne in diuine glory. Now this he did for thy commoditie, he bowed his eies to thy miserie and calamitie, which art so miserable a man, wholy damnable & abounding with sinne, thy natiuitie is vncleane, thy misery is on euery side most great, thou hast deserued nothing but the wrath of God & eternall damnation. If thou hadst bene a Carthusian Monke a thowsand yeares, thou couldest not deliuer thy self from this miserye and damnation. But Christ is able to helpe thee, he is rich and hath strength sufficient: seeing therefore he can doe such thinges, he doth them willingly and with pleasure. Loue enforceth him so farre, that he employeth all thinges for thy sake, and bestoweth whatsoeuer he hath for thee. Forasmuch then as Christ sheweth so great loue toward thee, and giueth vnto thee whatsoeuer he is able, do thou likewise to thy neighbour. Wilt thou worke workes? deriue them to thy neighbour, who is compassed with troubles & miseries. Thou must doe nothing for this cause, that Christ hath neede thereof, whereby thou maist enrich him, for neither was he bountiful to this ende, that he might any thing profit his father thereby, or that he might receiue any commoditie of him, but he did it onely for this cause, that therein the father might be well pleased, inasmuch as he submitteth him selfe wholy to his fathers will, and loueth vs with so great affection?

A most excellent example to be followed of all Christians in doing of good workes.

After the same sort we also must doe in our works toward our neighbour, which we ought therefore onely to doe, that we may giue thanks to the father, that he sheweth his fauour vnto vs, for

that he hath giuen his beloued sonne vnto me, to bestow vpon me whatsoeuer he hath. When I beleue this vndoutedly, I burst forth and say: If God sheweth vnto me so great benefits and fauour in his beloued sonne, ꝑ he suffereth him to bestow all things vpon me, I also will doe the like againe, and bestow all thinges whereby I may doe good to my neighbour and loue him. And so I doe not lift vp myne eyes vnto heauen, but I go thether, where my neighbour is oppressed wᵗ aduersitie, pouertie, sickness, sinne, or errour, and I helpe him wherein soeuer I am able. Thus doe thou whosoeuer thou art, which mindest to do true good workes: as thou wouldest haue done to thy selfe, if thou were troubled with pouertie, so doe thou to thy neighbour being poore. Againe, if thy neighbour be a sinner, and thou seest it, but thou thy self art without sinne, and hast a holy natiuitie, goe, preach vnto him, whereby he also may be deliuered. But thou must doe all these things freely in euery respect, as Christ hath done for thee without all workes and merits, of pure grace, loue, and mercy. Such workes see thou doe, if thou wilt doe good and Christian workes in deede. God hath no neede of them, neuertheles thou must doe them in respect of him, inasmuch as it so pleaseth him, and he will haue it to be so. This onely is rightly to doe good workes, which those hypocrites do not, which will merit heauen by their chastity, pouertie, & obedience. Unto whom I pray you are such workes of theirs good? I my selfe neede them not, neither doe they profit my neighbour, wherefore it is mere deceit, whereas a name is giuen to workes as though they did merit heauen, when as they are nothing worth, neither profitable to others. Laye vppe these thinges in your hartes, and do also according to them. In all this text being discussed from the beginning to the ending, ye haue these two thinges, namely faith and loue. If ye shall keepe these, then both the holy natiuitie of Christ shall be a helpe, commoditie, and comfort vnto you, and also ye shall be spiritually the children of his mother, as Christ Iesus is her childe carnally.

An exposition of the song of the Angells,
Glory be to God on high, &c.

Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, good will towards men. Forasmuch as this song is very common, and there be fewe that rightly vnderstande it, when as notwithstanding it con-

contayneth many thinges in it, I thinke good to handle it somewhat at large. The Angells in this hymne apply three things to three: glory to God, peace to the earth, and good will vnto men. The first is the honour or glory of God, with which we must beginne, that in all thinges prayse and glory may be ascribed to God, as to him which doeth, giueth, and hath all thinges, so that none may chalenge any good thing at all vnto himselfe, neither ought to count it his owne. Glory is so due to God onely, that no part therof may be deriued to any other. Adam being perswaded of Satan, went about to take this glory to him selfe, whereby all men fell into the displeasure of God, & haue that vice so throughly fixed in their mind, that no other thing can be so hardly pluckt away from them. Euery man pleaseth him selfe, no man can abide to seeme that he is nothing, or is able to doe nothing, whereof come almost all euills, so many contentions, warres, and innumerable other discommodities. This glory Christ gaue to God his father, teaching that all our thinges are nothing before God but sinnes, which deserue his wrath and indignation, and nothing lesse then glory. Wherfore there is no cause, that we should euen neuer so litle please our selues or glory in them, but rather that we should be ashamed and feare, being set in so great perill and confusion, that so all our glory and pleasing of our selues may passe away and come to nothing, and we may reioyce being destitute of our owne glorie, that we may be found & saued in Christ alone.

Glory due to God alone.

The second is peace in earth. For, as where the glory of God is not, and where euery one seeketh his owne glory, there can not be peace, according as Salomon sayth Prouerb. 13. Among the proude there is euer strife: so contrariwise, where the glory of God is knowne, there true peace also must needes be. For why should they contend? why should they disagree, which doe know euery one of them, that they haue no good thing of their owne, but that all thinges which are, which they haue, and which they are able to doe, come from God, to whose power also they commit all thinges, they in the meane season being very wel content, that they haue God fauorable vnto them? Howe also can it be, that when one counteth nothing of him selfe and the thinges that be his, he should be so carefull of him selfe and his thinges, that he should moue contention with any because of them? Such be-

Where true peace is, and where it is not.

leeue that Christ onely is made all thinges vnto them, him they thinke on, and for him alone they contend. Hereupon it certainly followeth, that there can be no contention or discord at al among true Christians: which maner of peace of Christians Esay declareth, & sayth: No man shall doe euill vnto an other, no man shall destroy an other in my holy hill, that is, in the Church of Christ. The cause hereof he addeth next after: The earth is full of the knowledge of God, that is, for all know God, as to whom all good thinges doe belong, and all their owne things they confesse to be nothing but sinnes, they may easily therefore haue peace among them selues. Wherefore the same Esay sayth in an other place: They shall breake their swordes into mattocks, & their speares to make sythes, and one shall not lift vp a weapon against an other, neither shall they learne ro fight from thence forth. Hereupon Christ is called the king of peace, or the prince of peace, of whom Salomon was a figure, who is called peaceable. For Christ is truly called our king Salomō, that is, peaceable, which hath restored peace vnto vs inwardly with God through faith in him, and outwardly w̄ our neighbours through loue, whereby we liue friendly with all men: and so by him we haue peace euery where both inwardly, and outwardly in the earth.

The peace of Christians described by Esai. *Esai.* 11. 9.

Esai. 2. 4.

Good will. The third is good will of men. Not that good will, whereby we worke good workes, but whereby we take in good part all thinges that happen, whether they be good or euill, sweete or sower, and do receiue them with a quiet hart. The Angells knew that the peace which they did sing of, should be only among Christians, which in all thinges doe depend vpon Christ, and vsurpe nothing to them selues as their owne. But in the meane season the world and Satan, which doe exceedingly enuie them, doe on euery side procure trouble vnto them, and persecute them euen vnto the death, so that they may looke for no peace or quietnes at all of these, for Christ sayth Joh. 16. In me ye shall haue peace, but in the world ye shall haue affliction. Therefore it was not enough for the Angells to haue soong, peace in earth, but it was to be added: and good will towardes men, that when they, as much as they are able, haue peace with all men, and neuertheles are continually hated of all men, and doe suffer persecution, they may alwaies keepe a good wil, wherby they may take all things

in

in good parte, and giue thankes to God, howesoeuer he dealeth with them, or suffereth them to be dealt with, they may not murmure, but resigne and commit themselues wholy to the will of God, yea (forasmuch as they knowe that God doth dispose & gouerne all thinges, whom they are sure, that they haue a mercifull and most fauorable father vnto them through Christ) they may euen reioyce & be glad in persecutions, according to that saying of Paule in the Epistle to the Romanes: VVe reioyce in afflictions and persecutions. For inasmuch as they haue a ioyfull conscience and a sure trust of the fauour of God, they can not but count all thinges for the best, whatsoeuer happen.

Christians must beare persecution and trouble patiently.

Behold what kinde of good will it is in all thinges, whether they be prosperous or vnprosperous, which the Angells doe here wish vnto men, & sing to be propper to the beleuers. Where such good will is wanting, there peace can not long be. Men take all thinges in the worse part, they take nothing in good part, but do alwayes increase and double the euil. Hereupon howsoeuer God dealeth with them, they like it not, but require that they may be dealt otherwise with, and so it falleth out as it is in Psal. 18. with the pure thou shalt be pure, and with the froward thou shalt be froward, that is, with him that counteth all thinges pure to him selfe, and hath that good will in all thinges, whereof we haue spoken, thou also doost well agree, inasmuch as he pleaseth thee and all good men. But he that is froward, so that neither thou, nor those thinges that are thine doe like him, can not but displease both thee and all good men. Of this well pleasing one an other Paule speaketh 1. Cor. 10. Endeuour to please all men, euen as I please all. By what meanes shall this be done? If thou take all thinges in good part, and suffer others to please thee, thou also againe shalt please others. The matter may be comprehended in one word: If thou wilt be liked of none, nothing shall be liked of thee: If thou wilt be liked of all, suffer that all thinges may be also liked of thee, but so, that thou doe not neglect the worde of the Lord. For that ought to be preferred before all, without any regard had of all mē, what pleaseth them, or what displeaseth them. But whatsoeuer may be done without transgressing the word of God, giue place to all, & submit thy iudgement to the iudgement of others, that thou mayst take euery thing in good part, which shall chaunce vnto thee, & so thou shalt haue the good wil, where-

Where good will is not, there peace can not continue.

How farre we may please men and submit our selues vnto them.

of the Angells did sing.

By this song it may be vnderstood, what nature the Angells haue. I omit those thinges which the Philosophers haue dreamed hereof: here is so described what the Angells are, that it can not be more fully done, their hart and cogitations being declared. First with great ioy they sing prayses to God, acknowledging all thinges to be due vnto him, and therefore doe with an ardent mind, and singing glorifie him. As therefore thou wouldest thinke of a right lowly, pure, and obedient hart, praysing God, and alwayes enioying perpetuall gladnes in him, so thinke also of the Angells: and thou hast now the nature of Angells, as much as they haue to doe with God. The second thing to be considered in them is their loue towardes vs. Thinke that they are most louing toward vs, which desire that it may goe as well with vs as with them selues, they doe no lesse reioyce for our safetie then for their owne, & euen in this hymne full of loue to vsward, they declare them selues so affected toward vs, that surely, we may thinke and reioyce of them, as of most louing friends. This is to knowe the Angells truely, not according to their essence, whereof the Philosophers doe foolishly & without frute babble many thinges, but according to their hart and mind, so that albeit I know not, what their nature is in it selfe, yet I know what is their chiefe desire, and their continuall worke. Thus much shall suffice at this tyme concerning the song of the Angells, and the frute of the natiuitie of the child Iesus Christ. God graunt vs his grace, that we may print these thinges in our hart, & according vnto them also amend our life.

Amen.

The first thing to be considered in the Angells.

The second thing which we ought to marke in the Angells.

A

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, OF THE EPIPHANIE OR APPEARING OF CHRIST.

Matth. 2.

Verse. 1. WHen Ieſus then was borne at Bethlehem in Iudea, in the dayes of Herod the Kinge, beholde there came wiſe men from the Eaſt to Ieruſalem,

2. Saying, where is that king of the Iewes that is borne? for we haue ſeene his ſtarre in the Eaſt, and are come to worſhip him.

3. When kinge Herod hearde this, he was troubled, and all Ieruſalem with him:

4. And gathering together all the chiefe Prieſtes and Scribes of the people, he asked of them, where Chriſt ſhould be borne.

5. And they ſayde vnto him, at Bethlehem in Iudea: for ſo it is written by the Prophet,

6. And thou Bethlehem in the lande of Iuda, art not the leaſt amonge the Princes of Iuda: For out of thee ſhall come the gouernour, that ſhal feede that my people Iſraell.

7. Then Herod priuily called the wiſe men, and diligently inquired of them the tyme of the ſtarre that appeared.

8. And ſent them to Bethlehem, ſaying: Goe and ſerch diligently for the childe, & when ye haue found him, bring me worde againe, that I may

come also and worship him.

9. So when they had heard the king, they departed: and loe, the starre which they had seene in the East, went before them, till it came & stood ouer the place, where the childe was.

10. And when they sawe the starre, they reioyced with an exceeding great ioy.

11. And went into the house, and found the childe with Marie his mother, and fell downe, & worshipped him, and opened their treasures and presented vnto him giftes, euen golde, & frankincense, and myrrhe.

WE celebrate this day a noble, and most comfortable feast, concerning the appearing of the Lorde Jesus, who appeared, a special comfort to al them which seeke him with a stronge faith: first to the wise men which came from the East: secondly to Iohn the Baptist, when being about thirty yeares of age he was baptized of him in Iordane, and the holy Ghost and voyce of the father gaue testimonie of him, that he is the sonne of God: thirdly, when he shewed his glory and power in a miracle, wherein he turned water into wine at a mariage, whereby he would procure reuerence and estimation to matrimony, which now (Alas) is after a shamefull sort torne, contemned, and reiected of the Pope & his adherents as a certaine miserable and wretched state. For whatsoeuer God hath ordained, that of the world is contemned: whereof at conuenient time we will speake more, and we haue already as I thinke written sufficient therof. Now we will speake in few wordes of the first appearance.

The wise men of Arabia, which were industrious men, and without all dout gouernours of that countrie (as it was at that time the maner in those partes) when they had seene the starre in the East, breaking of all delaye, made haste to Ierusalem, diligently seeking for the kinge of the Iewes being newe borne. Where we ought to marke, that they could neither seeke nor finde

finde out this king, the Lorde Christ, but by the starre going before them, which at the last ledde them so farre, that by the word of God they were certified, where this king was to be found. So also is it with vs: we can not finde Christ without the Gospell, without the word of God. That must shew him vnto vs, & bringe vs thither, where we may finde him: which then onely is done, when we receiue the same Gospell by faith, otherwise, although we haue it, heare it, and know it, it profiteth vs nothing at all, we shall not therefore finde him, no more surely then the Scribes founde him, who notwithstanding had the Scriptures readily, and shewed the way to other, not comming into it them selues, for the thing did not touch their harts. They did drousily neglect that king, whom with great sighes they had looked for many ages. Wherefore it is not enough that we haue the Gospell, or that we heare it, but we must beleue it, and lay it vp in the secrets of our hart, otherwise we shall neuer finde Christ. Here also you see, that it doth not skill, whether one be learned or vnlearned, instructed in many places of Scripture, or in few, vnto whom God giueth the grace, he enioyeth Christ. He respecteth not the person, but whom he draweth he is drawne, although in the meane season he prouideth that the Gospell be alwayes preached.

Without the word of God receaued by faith, we can not finde Christ.

After therfore that these wise men had found the child Christ, the king of the Iewes at Bethlehem, together with Ioseph and Marie, by the shewing of the Scripture & guiding of the starre, they were nothing offended at the poore estate of the childe, but being taught by the word, acknowledged that Child for the Messias and king of the Iewes, whom the Iewes had looked for so many yeares, & opened their treasures before him, offering vnto him golde, frankincense and myrrhe. Wherein againe we ought to marke the nature of faith, that it is offended at nothing, but cleaueth to the word onely, and nothing esteemeth those thinges that shine outwardly. These wise men doe not therefore disdayne neither turne backe, because the child together with his parents were without all pompe in pouertie and miserie, and nothing lesse then a kingly child appeareth vnto them, but they goe on, and vndoutedly acknowledge him for a king, as they had learned concerning him out of the Scriptures. Moreouer they giue vnto him the honour meete for a king, they offer most precious gifts, which they had brought, being euen of the best sort, out of their

The wise men are not offended at the poore & miserable estate of Christ.

owne countrie. Nowe the worlde would haue done no such thing, but accordyng to the maner thereof, would haue looked for garments of purple, and resort of seruaunts, and handmaydens. In such places it is wont to bestow his giftes, to wit, where there is great plentie and abundance of thinges before: yea it is of that qualitie, that it depriueth the poore and afflicted of those thinges that they haue, it taketh breade out of the mouth of the hungry & needie, which haue nothing, but as they get it hardly, by labouring sore all that they are able.

How the world dealeth with the poore and afflicted.

Whereof we haue to learne, that if we will honour Christ with these wise men, we must shut our eies, and turne them from all that which seemeth fayre, goodly and noble before the worlde: Neither must thou be offended or abhorre it, if any thing seeme vile, contemptible and ridiculous vnto the worlde: let this suffize thee, that thou knowest that it pleaseth God, which is in heauen. Take heede vnto thy selfe concerning those thinges, which shine before the worlde, exercise thy selfe in those workes, which seeme vnto reason foolish and light, as are, to helpe the needie, to comfort the afflicted, & to count the calamitie of thy neighbour, thine owne. If thou shalt be diligently exercised in these, and faith being thy guide, shalt endeuour rightly to apply thy self vnto them, then other workes which haue a fayre shewe, as to institute masses, to be occupied in vigils and peares mindes, to build temples, and such like follies, shal by them selues be pluckt out of thy hart & vanish away, vnto which workes, surely now almost the whole worlde is addicted: they are in deede fayre in the very outwarde shew, and seeme to be very precious, when as notwithstanding they are an abhomination vnto God. But whatsoeuer God hath commaunded, as to doe good to our neighbour, and to be touched with his aduersities no lesse then with our own, to beare a friendly and well willing minde toward him, these are neglected, and in the eyes of the worlde appeare trifling and foolish: whereupon we doe greatly abhorre them. How commeth this to passe? Euen therefore, because they haue no goodly shew outwardly. And the common people of Germanie are wont to say: That which shineth not, or hath not a fayre shew, is nothing set by.

We must not esteeme those things which seeme precious to the world, but those which to the world seeme contemptible and of no value.

Moreouer God doth sooner suffer him selfe to lacke his owne honour and due seruice, then that he woulde haue vs to leaue of from doing our dutie toward our neighbour, as Christ witnesseth Matth.

Matth.5. If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembrest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leaue there thine offering before the altar, and goe thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come, and offer thy gift. Here ye doe most plainly both heare and see, that God will not be serued, vnles we first goe to our neighbour, and be reconciled to him. For the same cause also God reiecteth the sacrifices of the Iewes, as it is in ỳ Prophesie of Esay chap. 1 for that they did neglect those thinges which were more necessary, namely mercy and faith: for thus he sayth: VVhy offer ye so many sacrifices vnto me? I am ful of the burnt offerings of weathers, & of the fat of fed beasts, I haue no pleasure in the blood of bullocks, lammes, & goates. VVhen ye come to appeare before me treading in my courts, who hath required this at your handes? Offer me no mo oblations, for it is but lost labour: incense is an abhominable thing vnto me. I may not away with your newe moones, your sabbathes, & solemne meetings, your solemne assemblies are wicked. I hate your new moones and appointed feastes euen from my very hart, they make me weary, I can not abide them. VVhē ye hold out your handes, I will turne mine eyes from you: and though ye make many prayers, yet I will heare nothing at all, seeing your handes are full of blood. VVashe you, make you cleane, put away your euil thoughts out of my sight, cease from doing of euill. Learne to doe well, apply your selues to equitie, deliuer the oppressed, helpe the fatherles to his right, defend the widow, & so forth as is there rehearsed of Esay. By these words of Esay ye see what God requireth, & what he alloweth. When we neglect those workes, by which our neighbour is serued, he againe will neglect vs. For whatsoeuer benefit we bestow vppon our neighbour, that we bestow vppon God and Christ him selfe, as he shall pronounce in the last iudgement: VVhatsoeuer ye haue done to one of the least of these my brethren, ye haue done it vnto me.

God doth not accept the seruice which we offer him, if we neglect charitie toward our neighbour.

Matth.25 40

When thou heareſt this, thou wilt not glory much, of the temples which thou hast builded, or masses which thou hast founded. For then he will say: what haue I to doe with thy temples and Masses? what with thine altar and bells? thinkest thou that I am delighted with stones, and wood, with bells and banners? Are not all thinges mine first? Heauen is my seate, and the earth is

God will accept, not the works which we haue inuented, but which he him selfe hath commaunded.

my footestoole. Who commaunded thee to build temples? I haue set liuing temples before thee, these are to be edified, nourished, & relieued, but thou hast bene occupied with other trifles, which I haue not commaunded. I know thee not, away with thy temples and masses: ye ought to haue put your trust in me onely, but all your delight consisted in such workes, as though it had bene your purpose by so doing to wrest heauen from me, & that I may comprehend all in a briefe summe: whatsoeuer I haue commaunded, that hath bene of you neglected: and whatsoeuer I haue detested and abhorred, that ye haue diligently done: this therefore I will requite you with again, I know you not, ye may resort vnto that god which hath commaunded you to doe these thinges.

Here therefore let vs learne, how the wise men did nothing abhorre the poore & on euery side miserable appearance of this infant and his parents, that we also may be so affected toward the miserable and pitifull estate of our neighbours, & may be perswaded that we doe find Christ in them, & that whatsoeuer is bestowed vpon them, Christ doth acknowledge it as bestowed vpon him selfe. His kingdom consisteth in the poore, despised & abiects, yea in the holy crosse, in contempt, in persecution, in affliction & miserie, as Paule sayth out of the Psalme: for thy sake we are killed all the day long, and are counted as sheepe appointed to be slaine. In an other place also he sayth: we are made as the filth of the world, the ofskowring of all thinges. Wherefore Christ sayd to his disciples, when he sent them forth to preach in Iudea: Behold I send you forth as sheepe in the middes of the vvolues. They now that seeke Christ any other where then in such a contẽptible forme, in ẏ crosse, & in persecution, do not find him. The wise mẽ did find ẏ king Christ being newly borne, not in Herods court, not among the Princes & priests, not at Hierusalem, in so noble and famous a city, but at Bethlehem in a stable, with poore and despised creatures, namely Ioseph and Marie. In a summe, Christ will there be foũd, where a man would least seeke for him.

The kingdõ of Christ wherein it consisteth.

Psal. 44. 20.

2. *Cor.* 4. 11.

1. *Cor.* 4. 13.

Matth. 10. 16

But we must diligently consider also, what these wise men signified by their giftes. For assuredly they shewed by them, that this child is a king, and not a king onely, but also God, and man. In offering gold they acknowledged him for a king, as if they would say: We bring vnto thee gold, not that we would thereby enrich thee. For gold, siluer, and whatsoeuer is made is thine be-

What the wise men signified by their offring of gold.

fore,

foze, but hereby we acknowledge thee to be a moſt mighty king ouer all thinges. So we alſo offer gold vnto Chriſt, when we acknowledge him foz our king and Lozd: but vnto this is required a very ſtronge faith. Foz if I ought to acknowledge him foz my king and Lozd, all mine owne will muſt be extinguiſhed, that it reigne nothing at all in me: foz Chriſt onely muſt reigne & rule in me, that he may doe whatſoeuer it pleaſeth him in me, and concerning me, all thinges muſt be committed vnto him. So the leper in Matthew did, which ſayd vnto Chriſt: Lord, if thou vvilt thou canſt make me cleane. Therefoze my will muſt be vtterly extinguiſhed in me, if ꝑ I will haue Chriſt to reigne in me. Chriſt alſo ſuffered not his owne will to rule, but he alwayes ſubmitted him ſelfe to the will of his father, which he teſtifieth in the firſt chapter of the Goſpell by S. Iohn: I came dovvne from heauen, not to doe mine ovvne vvill, but his vvill vvhich hath ſent me. Yea he obeyed his father euen vnto death, and ſubmitted him ſelfe wholy to his will. We imitating this example, which is vvritten foz our ſingular conſolation, ought to ſubmit our will to God and his Chriſt, and to reſt confidently vpon him. He knoweth howe to bringe the matter notably well to paſſe, as it is ſayd Pſal. 37. Commit thy vvay vnto God, and put thy truſt in him, and he ſhall bringe it to paſſe. And a litle after: Hold thee ſtill in God, and ſuffer him to vvorke vvith thee. Such ſentences ought to prouoke vs, patiently to ſuffer the will of God in vs, whether ſweete thinges oz ſowze, commodities oz diſcommodities come vnto vs: foz he knoweth with what temperature to lay them vpon vs. Bleſſed is he that beleueth theſe thinges from his hart. Who being ſuch a one, can be troubled with ſozow? Such a man howſoeuer he be hãdled, whether he be burned oz dzowned, caſt into pziſon, oz otherwiſe grieuouſly delt with, he taketh all in good part. Foz he knoweth that theſe thinges ſhall turne to his commoditie. After this ſozt doe we alſo offer golde with the wiſe men, when we take away rule from our owne will, and do ſuffer Chriſt to wozke in vs accozdinge to his will & pleaſure. Wherefoze they are hypocrites, which knowe not to ſuffer the will of God, but howſoeuer he dealeth with them, haue alwayes, whereof they doe complayne. They fozſooth ſuppoſe, that whatſoeuer they thinke, it ſhall haue ſucceſſe accozding to their thinking, If it fall out otherwiſe, they are angrie, they do not patiently ſuf-

How & whē we offer gold vnto Chriſt.

fer persecution and contempt: they murmure, they finde fault, and vexe when those thinges happen, no otherwise then horses being stirred vp with furie or rage. So therfore by resisting they staye the kingdome of Christ from them, and depriue Christ of gold, which notwithstanding they ought to offer and present vnto him, that is, they themselues will beare rule, & doe not vouchsafe to acknowledge Christ for their king and Lord.

Frankincense what it signified, and when we offer the same vnto Christ.

By frankincense they resembled diuine honour, which we the offer vnto him, when we confesse, that whatsoeuer we haue, we must acknowledge it to haue come from God, and that we haue it freely, and without any merit of ours: Wherefore all these thinges are to be ascribed vnto him, as to the true Lord, neither must we glorie one whitte in the good thinges receiued, but his glorie is to be sought in them. And if he take them from vs againe, we ought to suffer him with quiet mindes, and to blesse him with the beloued Job in these wordes: Naked came I out of my mothers wombe, and naked shal I returne thither again: the Lorde gaue, and the Lorde hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. And so we ought to suffer all misfortunes and aduersities, as if God him selfe did cast them vppon our necke, so that none shall be able to offende vs, vnles he take away Christ from vs. Not so muche as a heare of our heades shal perish, as Christ sayth to his Disciples Luke 21. Wherefore whatsoeuer shal molest vs, what aduersity soeuer shal come vnto vs, we ought neuer to seeke any other God, we ought no where to seeke any other helpe and comfort, then of Christ alone. This is he which is made vnto vs of God the father, wisedom, righteousnes, sanctification and redemption. Then onely we offer vnto Christ that right frankincense of Arabia, when we flie vnto him alone in our calamities, afflictions, and anguishes. But they that seeke after straunge helpes and comforts, as of Sorcerers, Witches, and such like, they doe not offer frankincense vnto Christ, but stinking brimstone, wherein they shall be burned for euer, for that they haue not beleued and trusted in Christ.

Iob. 1.21.

Myrrhe what it signified.

By myrrhe they signified a mortall man: for with myrrhe dead bodies were anointed, that for certaine yeares they should not putrifie. Now myrrhe is a stronge and bitter iuice, which distilleth from the trees of Arabia, like vnto gumme, or as with vs rosen issueth out of the pine tree, the firre tree, &c. But then we

we offer myrrhe vnto Christ, when we firmely beleeue that he by his death hath ouercome sinne, Satan and hell. And this is a speciall faith. If we doe but a litle dout here, it is not well with vs. But if I beleue from my hart, that death, sinne, the deuill, and hell are swallowed vp in and by the death of Christ, I shall not be afraid of them all. I shall easily be preserued from rottennes which death bringeth, when I haue myrrhe, that is, the death of my Lord Christ in my body and soule, this will not suffer me to perish. So stronge and valiant a thing is faith, vnto which euen all thinges are possible, as Christ sayth Mar. 9. Here must we learne daily with our Lord Christ to bring vnder our old Adam, and to mortifie his concupiscences, by the crosse, and tentations, not that crosse which we doe chose, but which Christ layeth on vs, let vs beare it patiently and with a willing mind, that so our body may be subdued, and made subiect to the spirit, that being so buried with Christ through baptisme, we may be rapsed vp againe with him, and he alone may reigne and liue in vs. Hereunto vehemēt sighing is required, which the holy Ghost doth make in vs for our sake, as Paule sayth Rom. 8. that Christ will helpe vs. to keepe vnder this vnruly and obstinate flesh, that it presume not too licentiously, & thrust the noble soule into the myre. This our baptisme doth signifie, to wit, no other thing then that that olde and stinking Adam be mortified, and buried, which we alwayes ought to reuolue in our minde, seeing that as long as we liue here, sinnes doe remayne in vs. Wherefore alwayes some thing must be repayred in vs without all intermission, through the cogitation of baptisme, as it were in a house decayed through oldnes, euen vntill such time as we depart this life. Whereof S. Paule entreateth in very goodly wordes Rom. 6. which are diligently to be marked of vs, now he sayth thus: Knovv ye not that all vve, vvhich haue bene baptized into Iesus Christ, haue bene baptized into his death? VVe are buried then with him by baptisme into his death, that like as Christ vvas raised vp from the dead to the glorie of the Father, so vve also shoulde vvalke in nevvnes of life. For if vve be planted vvith him, to the similitude of his death: euen so shall vve be to the similitude of his resurrection, knovving this, that our old man is crucified vvith him, that the bodie of sinne might be destroyed, that henceforth vve should not serue sinne. For he that is dead, is freed from sinne.

When we offer myrrhe vnto Christ.

VVherefore, if we be dead with Christ, we beleue that we shal liue also with him, knowing that Christ being rayſed from the dead, dieth no more: death hath no more dominion ouer him. For in that he died, he died once to ſinne, but in that he liueth, he liueth to God. Likewiſe thinke ye alſo that ye are dead to ſinne, but are aliue to God in Ieſus Chriſt our Lord. Thus much concerning the firſt appearance.

Three thigs to be conſidered in Chriſtes Baptiſme.

Now we will ſpeake ſomewhat of the ſecond, that is of the baptiſme of Chriſt. In the baptiſme of Chriſt three thinges are to be conſidered: The firſt, that the heauens were opened, when he was baptized. The ſeconde, that the holy Ghoſt was ſeene in the likenes of a doue. The third, that the voice of the father was heard, which ſayd: This is my beloued ſonne, in vvhome I am vvell pleaſed. Whereas Chriſt vouchſaued to be baptiſed with water, he hath hallowed baptiſme, & made the water thereof holy, ỳ he which is baptized in his name, might become likewiſe holy and cleane from ſinne, and might haue the heauens open. Now Chriſt was not baptized for him ſelfe, for he was not infected with the ſpot of any ſinne, as S. Peter ſayth 1. Pet. 2. He behaued him ſelfe like vnto a good Philitian, which before the ſicke doth firſt drinke ſome bitter potion, that the ſicke may more gladly and boldly doe the ſame afterward. For we in baptiſme drinke a bitter potion, namely, the mortification of the olde Adam, which with the bitternes thereof doth greatly trouble vs. For that dipping into the water or ſprinkling with it doth ſignifie nothing els, but that that old Adam ſhould periſh & die. This is greatly furthered by the croſſe, which God according to his diuine will layeth vpon vs, which we ought not to caſt from vs, but beare it willingly & with a patient mind. But that this might be eaſier for vs to doe, euen Chriſt hath taken it vpon him ſelfe, he ſuffered him ſelfe to be baptized, and tooke his croſſe and caried it nothing reſiſting or gayneſaying, and ſo was obedient to his father vnto the death, euen the death of the croſſe, as Paule ſayth Philip. 2. that he might deliuer vs from ſinnes, and might againe appeaſe his heauēly father, which ſurely he did of his mere grace without any deſert of ours: whereof we haue baptiſme a ſigne & pledge, as Paule ſayth vnto Titus: But vvhen that bountifulnes and that loue of God our Sauiour tovvard man appeared, not by the vvorks of righteouſnes, vvhich vve had done, but according

cording to his mercy he saued vs, by the vvashing of the nevve birth, and the renuing of the holy Ghost, vvhich he shed on vs aboundantly, through Iesus Christ our Sauiour, that vve being iustified by his grace, should be made heires according to the hope of eternall life.

Secondly the holy Ghost appeareth here in the likenes of a doue, when Christ is baptized, whereby is signified that we also doe receiue the holy Ghost in our baptisme, which ruleth and guideth vs according to the will of God, which is present with vs, & helpeth vs in bearing the burden of the holy crosse, which exhorteth vs, is instant vpon vs, enforceth vs, and when we yeld to the burden of the crosse, is present and helpeth vs: if we fall, rayseth vs vp againe, and is with vs as a certeine faithfull companion in our iorney. He also maketh the burden of the crosse light, which we were very vnable to beare, if he did not put to his helpe. If so be that thou fall into sinne, remember to goe backe vnto thy Baptisme, for this is the onely ship, wherein we passe ouer. Wherefore take heede of them which make two tables, wherby we passe ouer the sea of sinnes, namely baptisme and repentance. Beleeue them not, whatsoeuer they handle, it is mere delusion: baptisme is the beginning of repentance. As often therefore as thou falleſt into sinne, haue recourse vnto thy baptisme, there thou shalt againe obtaine the holy Ghost, who may be present with thee. For repentance is nothing else, but a displeasing of him selfe, a detesting of his wicked life, and a renuing of the man, which is represented in baptisme. After such a renuing of the life, followeth the prayse of God, and thankesgiuing vnto him for the grace receiued, then such a man burſteth forth, & behaueth him self friendly toward his neighbour, & doth good to him in all thinges. This is signified by that, that the holy Ghost appeared vpon Christ in the likenes of a doue: for a doue wanteth the gall. Such they also become, which receiue the holy Ghost in baptisme, to witte, they are gentle and without all bitternes toward all.

The second thing to be considered in the baptisme of Christ.

Thirdly, the voyce of the father is heard in the baptisme of Christ, which sayth: This is my beloued Sonne, in vvhom I am well pleased. This is that Sauiour, which deliuereth vs from the tyrannie of sinne, death, Satan, and hell. And here we must learne, how we must come vnto God. He that desireth to be the gratious & deare childe of God the father, must attaine vnto this

The third thing to be considered in the baptisme of Christ.

throughe Christ, throughe him alone the beloued sonne, who sitteth in the bosom of his father: vnto whom alone the father looketh, without whom he alloweth nothing, and whatsoeuer pleaseth the father, it pleaseth him in respect of this his sonne. Wherefore he that desireth to goe to ỹ father, must cleaue to this beloued sonne, must lay him selfe vpon his backe. For by this voice all titles albeit they seeme very goodly and holy, are taken away, nothing is of value or estimation with the father but onely this his beloued sonne, he is in his especiall fauour. Now he that desireth to be in fauour with the father, and to be beloued of him, let him flie into the bosom of the sonne, by whom afterward he findeth accesse to the father, as Paule sayth Ephe. 1. that throughe Christ we are adopted, without this Christ we are the enemies of God. Whosoeuer therefore cleaueth to Christ throughe faith, he abideth in the fauour of God, he also shall be made beloued and acceptable, as Christ is, and shall haue felowship with the father and the sonne. But where this is not done, there is nothing but wrath, there no honestie, no vertue, no free will, neither prayer, nor fasting, nor other workes shall profit, thou shalt but trifle with all these. For this is a most mighty, and most excellent voice: This is my beloued sonne, in whom all thinges consist and are comprehended, which are extant in the whole Scripture. Euen as all things are deliuered into the handes of Christ, and gathered into one, that they may obey him, as S. Paule sayth. For when God sayth: This is my beloued sonne, by shewing Christ only, and shewing and naming no other, he maketh it plaine enough, that none is his beloued sonne beside him. If so be that other are not beloued sonnes, it is certaine that they are the children of wrath and indignation. For if there were moe beloued sonnes, he would not so set forth & shew this sonne alone, saying: This is my beloued sonne, neither would turne his eyes vnto him onely, and glory of him alone, as though he knew no other. For the words seeme to shew, that he did diligently looke about, & yet founde none, beside him, of whome he sayth: this is he, as if he sayde: Here at the last I haue founde such a one as pleaseth me, and is my beloued sonne, all other generally are not such.

Moreouer, these wordes are not so onely to be vnderstood, that it is shewed by them that Christ is very God, as the Epistle to the Hebrewes sayth: Vnto which of the Angells sayd he at any time,

time, Thou art my Sonne, this day begat I thee? and againe, I will be his father, and he shall be my sonne, &c. For it is most certaine that Christ in these wordes is declared to be the true and naturall sonne of God, seeing that this word was neuer sayd to any creature. Howbeit he had bene as well the sonne of God, and had so remayned for euer, as he hath bene from euerlasting, although this had not bene spoken vnto vs from heauen, neither is any thinge added or taken away from him by this name, but we must thus thinke & perswade our selues, that so excellent a praise, and so noble honour of Christ was spoken for our cause. For he him selfe witnesseth in John, that this came not because of him selfe, but for our sakes. He hath no neede that it should be sayd vnto him, that he is the sonne of God. He knew this before, & hath from euerlasting & by his nature, that which he heareth. Wherefore when that is conceiued by voyce and word, it pertaineth to vs, and not vnto Christ. Christ without the word, is such as he is said to be. We haue the word without him, of whom it is spoken. Wherefore we must lay fast hold vppon the word without the essence, euen as he hath the essence without the word. *Ioh. 12. 30.*

But what doth this word? it teacheth vs to know Christ, in which knowledge our saluation consisteth, as Esay, Paule, and Peter doe witnes. But how doth it teach vs to know him? so, that he is the sonne of God, and doth especially please God his father, by which wordes God cheereth the hartes of all the faithfull, and greatly delighteth them with mere comfort, and heauenly sweetnes. Howe is this done? When I knowe, and am sure, that this man Christ is the sonne of God, and doth in all things please the father, whereof I must be most fully perswaded: forasmuch as the diuine maiestie doth confirme this by his voyce from heauen, which can not lye, whereby I am certaine, that whatsoeuer that man doth speake and worke, they are the mere wordes & workes of the beloued sonne, which are aboue measure approued of God. This therefore I doe singularly well marke, and lay vppe in the bottom of my harte. When as therefore I doe hereafter heare Christ speake, or see him doe any thing, and that for my commoditie, which surely he euery where doth, (for he sayth, that he doth and suffereth all thinges for vs, that he came to serue and not that he should be serued,) then I remember these wordes of the father, that he is the beloued sonne, then I am enforced to

thinke, that all that Christ speaketh, doth, and suffereth, and that for my sake, doth singularly well please God.

Nowe howe can God poure out him selfe more liberally, or shew him selfe more louingly and sweetely, then by saying, that it doth please him from ỹ hart, that Christ his sonne doth speake so gently with me, doth with so great affection looke vnto my commoditie, and with such vnusuall loue suffer, dye, and do whatsoeuer for my sake. Doest thou dout, that if mans hart did with due sense feele such fauour of God in Christ, to wit that he doth so much for our sakes, it would not for ioy burst into most small peeces? for then it woulde looke into the depth of the diuine breast, yea and into the exceeding and eternal goodnes and loue of God, which he beareth toward vs, and hath borne toward vs from euerlasting. But we are too hard harted and cold, the flesh doth lye more heauy vppon vs, then that we are able to comprehend such wordes, we doe not wel consider of them with our selues, neither doth our hart come neare to feele how maruelous and vnspeakeable loue and ioy they contayne in them, otherwise without dout we should perceiue, that heauen and earth are full of the fire of the diuine loue, of life and righteousnes, full of honour and praise, whereunto the fire of hel, whereunto sinne, & death being compared, are nothing but as it were a thing painted or pictured. But we are colde, sluggish, & vnthankfull wretches, for we passe ouer such precious wordes, as things of no importance, & as vttered of man, as being contayned in a booke, or writtē in paper, as things vtterly decayed, and now long since growne out of vse by long custom, as though they pertayne onely to Christ, and to vs nothing at all: And being dull and senseles, we doe not see that they belong nothing to Christ, but were committed to writing and are extant onely for our sake.

Seeing therefore that Christ the beloued sonne, being in so great fauour with God in all thinges that he doth, is thine, and doth in the same, serue thee, as he him selfe witnesseth, without dout thou art in the same fauour and loue of God that Christ him selfe is in. And againe, the fauour and loue of God are insinuated to thee as deepely, as to Christ, that now God together with his beloued sonne, doth wholy possesse thee, and thou hast him againe wholy, that so God, Christ, and thou doe become as one certaine thing. Hereunto make many sentences of the Gospell, but especially

ally in John, as this: If any man loue me, my father will loue him, and we will come vnto him, and will dwell with him. Also: Where I am, there shall also my seruaunt be. Againe: I pray that they may be one in vs as thou and I are one, I in thee, and thou in me, and they in me. But where is Christ? In the fauour of God, in the depth of his hart, there also are we, if so be that we know and loue Christ, there I thinke we are sure enough, there our refuge is placed high enough, whither no euill can come, as it is in the 91. Psalme. *John 14. 23.* *John 12. 26.* *John 17.*

But thou seest that faith is required hereunto, and that vnto these thinges no law, no worke, no merit doth preuayle. Hereupō it commeth to passe, that so precious wordes are so abstruse and vnknowen to reason. For it hath bin gouerned of Satan from ꝑ creation of the world, when as in Paradise it would be as God, & presumed after honour, which God here attributeth to Christ alone, forasmuch as he is his sonne, wherunto it is yet also prone and inclined, and setteth it selfe against these words, & the words againe are against it. For because Christ is here declared the only sonne of God, it is mightely ouerthrowne, whatsoeuer maketh it selfe god. But who be they that make them selues god? surely Satan and man, which please them selues, and loue them selues, they seeke not after God, but striue to attaine vnto this, that they also may become gods. But what will God say vnto these: Truly a certaine contrary thinge to that which he sayde vnto Christ: Christ is my beloued sonne, in whom I am well pleased, seeing that he glorifieth not him selfe, and maketh not him selfe God, although he be God. But ye are wretches, in whome I allowe nothing, seeing that ye glorifie your selues, and make your selues gods, albeit ye be creatures and men, and not God. So this sentēce giuen of Christ doth humble the whole world, doth shew them to be all voyd of diuinitie, and ascribeth it to Christ, and that all for our commoditie, if we will, and do admit this sentence: or to our condemnation, if we will not, and do contemne this sentence, so that I may say at once: without Christ there is no fauour, nor any beloued sonne, but very wrath and sore displeasure of God.

Certaine ſentences out of the Scripture concerning Chriſt, vvhereby is declared that through him vve are loued of the Father, and vvithout him are refuſed.

*Ioh.*1.16.17.

Of his fulnes,(to wit Chriſtes) haue all we receiued, and grace for grace. For the law was giuen by Moſes, but grace and truth came by Ieſus Chriſt.

*Ioh.*3.13.

No man aſcendeth vppe to heauen,but he that hath deſcended from heauen, euen the Sonne of man which is in heauen.

*Ioh.*3.16.17.18.

God ſo loued the world,that he hath giuen his only begottē ſonne,that whoſoeuer beleueth in him,ſhould not periſh, but haue euerlaſting life. For God ſent not his ſonne into the world, that he ſhould condemne the world, but that the world through him might be ſaued. He that beleueth in him,is not condemned,but he that beleeueth not, is condemned already, becauſe he hath not beleued in the name of that onely begotten Sonne of God.

*Ioh.*3.35.36.

The Father loueth the Sonne, and hath giuen all thinges into his hande. He that beleeueth in the Sonne, hath euerlaſting life, & he that obeyeth not the Sonne, ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

*Ioh.*6.40.

This is the will of him that ſent me, that euery man which ſeeth the Sonne,& beleueth in him,ſhould haue euerlaſting life,and I will rayſe him vp at the laſt day.

*Ioh.*7.37.38.

Now in the laſt great day of the feaſt, Ieſus ſtoode & cried, ſaying: If any man thirſt, let him come vnto me, and

and drinke. He that beleueth in me, as ſayth the Scripture, out of his belly ſhall flow riuers of water of life.

Tit.3.4.5.6.7.

But when that bountifulnes and that loue of God our Sauiour toward man appeared, not by the workes of righteouſnes, which we had done, but according to his mercy he ſaued vs, by the waſhing of the new birth, and the renuing of the holy Ghoſt, which he ſhed on vs aboundantly, through Ieſus Chriſt our Sauiour, that we being iuſtified by his grace, ſhould be made heires according to the hope of eternall life. Many other ſuch ſentences there be, eſpecially out of the Epiſtles of Paule, which euery one may gather by him ſelfe.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, OF THE GENEALOGIE OR PEDEGREE OF CHRIST.

Matth. 1.

Verſe 1. THis is the booke of the generation of Ieſus Chriſt the ſonne of Dauid, the ſonne of Abraham.

2. Abraham begat Iſaac, Iſaac begat Iacob, Iacob begat Iudas and his brethren.

3. Iudas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar, Phares begat Eſrom, Eſrom begat Aram.

4. Aram begat Aminadab, Aminadab begat Naaſſon, Naaſſon begat Salmon.

5. Salmon begat Booz of Rachab, Booz begat Obed of Ruth, Obed begat Ieſſe.
6. Ieſſe begat Dauid the king, Dauid the king begat Salomon of her that was the wife of Vrias.
7. Salomon begat Roboam, Roboam begat Abia, Abia begat Aſa.
8. Aſa begat Ioſaphat, Ioſaphat begat Ioram, Ioram begat Hozias.
9. Hozias begat Ioatham, Ioatham begat Achaz, Achaz begat Ezekias.
10. Ezekias begat Manaſſes, Manaſſes begat Amon, Amon begat Ioſias.
11. Ioſias begat Iechonias and his brethren, about the time they were caried away to Babylon.
12. And after they were brought to Babylon, Iechonias begat Salathiel, Salathiel begat Zorobabel.
13. Zorobabel begat Abiud, Abiud begat Eliacim, Eliacim begat Azor.
14. Azor begat Sadoc, Sadoc begat Achim, Achim begat Eliud.
15. Eliud begat Eleazar, Eleazar begat Matthan Matthan begat Iacob.
16. Iacob begat Ioſeph the husband of Marie, of whom was borne Ieſus that is called Chriſt.

The ſumme of this text.

MAtthew beginneth his booke with a title or inſcription, by which the beleuer is prouoked with greater pleaſure to heare and reade it. For he ſayth thus much in effect: Whom the Law and Prophets haue hetherto promiſed & preached, Ieſus, that is, a Sauiour, and Chriſt, that is an eternall king, that he according to the promiſe of God, ſhould ſpringe and come of the ſeede of Abraham and Dauid, euen him doe I deſcribe in this booke, to

wit

wit, that he is now borne, and made man, and already come into the world. This I handle through this whole booke.

2 Three lines or degrees are here rehearsed. In the first is contained the stocke of the fathers, in the second of the kings, in the third is contained the decaying stocke of Dauid: after the decay whereof it behoued that Christ should come. For so the goodnes of God is wont to doe, when all thinges seeme euen past hope and recouerie, then at the last he commeth.

3 Matthew omitteth one in his rehearsall, but that maketh no matter, seeing that he obserueth this one thing, that he counteth by the right line from Dauid by Salomon to Ioseph the husband of Marie. Luke counteth otherwise, and vseth an other order.

The exposition of the text.

When Adam our first father hauing fallen by a notable offence, was gilty of death with all his children, as well in body as in soule, it was notwithstanding promised vnto him, although obscurely, that both he and his posteritie should be deliuered, in those wordes which God spake to the Serpent: I will put enmitie betwene thee and the woman, betwene thy seede & her seede, and it shall treade downe thy head. Of these wordes Adam tooke comfort, that a woman should come, by whose frute such guile and sutteltie of the Serpent shoulde be againe amended, and Adam redeemed. This comfort did vphold Adam with his posteritie vntill Noe. For then the promise was renued, whē God made a couenant with the sonnes of Noe, and set the raine-bowe for a signe of the couenant, whereby men might conceiue a trust and confidence, that God is yet fauorable vnto them, and doth not purpose their destruction: whereby mankinde was againe vpheld and comforted euen vntill Abraham. Gen. 3. 15.

In the time of Abraham God did somewhat shewe forth his mercy, he declared that he would send a Sauiour, who should deliuer vs againe from death both of body and soule: for albeit the body should dye, yet it should not alwayes remayne in death, but rise againe with the Lord Christ: The wordes which God spake to Abraham Gen. 22. are thus: In thy seede shall all the nations

of the earth be blessed. Here miserable men had a cause to hope and looke for a Sauiour which should deliuer them. From that time all the Prophets did diuersly foretell of this aboue measure flowing fountaine of all mercy, that is, of this seede, of the Lord Christ, how that he at the last should come, that all which beleued in him, might obtaine saluation by that promise which can not be reuoked. If so be that men would now open their eyes, they must needes confesse and say, that a straunge and incredible thinge is done with vs, that man being in the state of damnation, cursed, & desperate, should be restored by the natiuitie of one man. Hereupon the Prophets cryed out with ardent prayers and vnspeakeable groning, that God would vouchsafe to sende the Sauiour whom he had promised. By faith in this Sauiour the Israelites afterward obtained the lawe, and this honour before all people, that they were called the elect people of God. By which ordinances written of Moses the anointed was plainely figured and signified, whom this text which we haue now in hand setteth forth, what he is, from whence he is, and by the afore said faith all obtayned saluation from Abraham vnto Dauid, euen as many as were saued.

In the time of Dauid God made the comming of the Messias to be more manifestly declared, that it might be certainly knowne of what stocke he should come: namely, of the stocke of Dauid,

2. *Sam.* 7. 12. as when God sayd vnto Dauid: VVhen thy dayes be fulfilled, thou shalt sleepe with thy fathers, and I will set vp thy seede after thee, which shall proceede out of thy body, and wil stablish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I vvill stablish the throne of his kingdom for euer. I will be his father, and he shall be my sonne. And yet more plainely in the Psalme:

Psal. 132. 11. The Lord hath made a faithfull othe vnto Dauid, and he shall not shrinke from it: Of the frute of thy bodye shall I set vppon thy seat. Here Christ is described, that he shall be a king, and an

Psal. 45. 6. eternall king, as it is mentioned of him in an other Psalme: Thy throne, O Lord endureth for euer, the scepter of righteousnes is the scepter of thy kingdome. Howebeit he is a spirituall king, which ruleth the worlde by his worde: and whosoeuer receiueth his word, pertaineth to his kingdom. But he that is not vnder this scepter, neither heareth his worde, is not of God, neither pertaineth to his kingdom, but is subiect to the kingdom of Satan,

Who pertaineth to the kingdom of Christ, and who to the kingdom of Satan.

tan, vnder whose tyrannie we all are, vntill the Lord doth deliuer vs from it, & defend vs with his scepter, which is then done when we beleeue in him. Forasmuch therefore as our saluation doth come meerly by the promise of God, let euery one assuredly perswade him selfe, þ he shal neuer obtaine saluation wout this promise: although he should do the workes of all Saincles, yet they should profit him nothing hereunto. Contrariwise, if we lay hold on the scepter of this king, that is, of the promise of God, we shal not perish, although the sinnes of the whole world should lye vpon vs, they shal be all swallowed vp in him, albeit no good worke be done of vs. As we see in the theefe, which hong by the Lord on the crosse, who layd hold on the word of God, & beleued in Christ, and therefore he obtayned the promised Paradise. Here is no dout left, let vs onely beleue that it is so, and it is so in deede, all thinges which men teach, or which we haue done or can doe, being set aside. Here all thinges must giue place, at the comming of this new king, that he alone may rule & reigne in vs. Let a man intermedle with those thinges that are written of this king, as being his owne matters, and as pertaining all vnto him. For whatsoeuer is written any where of Christ, it is written for our comfort, that we may thereby feede and cherish our faith. To the establishing of such faith God hath mercifully left vnto vs his promise written, and hath suffered to be published, that he will performe that which he hath promised. Whosoeuer apprehendeth this in his hart, it must needes be that with sighing he thirst for such Scripture and promise of God, who of his grace being not prouoked of vs, offereth vnto vs and bestoweth vpon vs such goodnes and mercy.

Whatsoeuer is written of Christ, it is written for our comfort.

But let vs now come to our present text, which not with words only, but also with a certeine force pearseth the hart, and poureth into it loue, pleasure, ioy, gladnes, &c. As if an Angell should now come from heauen, and say vnto vs miserable and condemned wretches, after this sort: Behold O man, thou hast sinned, wherfore thou hast deserued to be condemned for euer. (This being heard the hart must needes tremble.) Now although all this be true, yet neuertheles God of his grace hath mercy vppon thee, & sendeth to thee a Sauiour, as he promised to Abraham and his seede. Be of a good cheere, and giue thankes to God. Loe, here is the booke of the generation of Iesus Christ, who is the sonne of

Dauid, the sonne of Abraham, so that this is not onely done, but also written, that thou mayst be certaine thereof: Neither will he, neither can he deceiue: beleue onely, and thou shalt haue all things. Now it is to be noted that Matthew setteth Dauid before Abraham, although the promise was first made to Abraham, and came afterward to Dauid, which promise made to Dauid the Prophets did afterward publish more abroad, and did by it comfort the people. As in the 11. chapter of Esai, where the Prophet sayth thus: There shall come a rod forth of the stocke of Iesse, and a graffe shall growe out of his roote. Ieremie likewise sayth thus chap. 23. Behold the time commeth, sayth the Lord, that I wil raise vp the righteous braunch of Dauid, which king shall beare rule, and he shall prosper with wisedom, and shall set vp equitie & righteousnes againe in the earth. And many other such prophecies there are to be found in the writings of the Prophetes, which they foretold of Dauid, that his kingdom should be raysed vp, as ỹ Angell also declared vnto Marie, when

Luke 1.32. he sayd: The Lord God shall giue vnto him the throne of his father Dauid, & he shall reigne ouer the house of Iacob for euer,

Why Matthew setteth Dauid before Abraham. and of his kingdome shall be none ende. Wherefore Matthew thought good here to set Dauid first as the better knowne, & next vnto him, Abraham, vnto whom the promise was first made, as

Luke. 1.54. Marie in her song sayth: He remembring his mercy hath holpen his seruaunt Israell, as he promised to our fathers, Abraham & his seede for euer. And that promise is now performed, and in this our text described, as we shal see hereafter. S. Matthew maketh a triple difference of fathers, of whom Christ came, foureteene Patriarkes, foureteene Kings, & foureteene Princes. For it behoued that the scepter & kingdom should be taken from Iu-

Gen. 49.10. da, according to ỹ prophesie of Iacob, which is thus: The scepter shall not depart from Iuda, and a lawegiuer from betwene his feete, vntill Silo come: and vnto him shall the gathering of the people be. Here all thinges must be fulfilled: and there are thrise foureteene generations, euen as Matthew rehearseth them: from Abraham to Dauid foureteene generations, from Dauid til they were caried away into Babylon likewise foureteene generatiõs. Howbeit there is a person omitted in Matthew, that is Iakim, & it ought thus to be written: Iosias begat Iakim, & Iakim begat Iechonias and his brethren, this the Chronicles witnes. And af-

ter

ter they were caried away into Babylon vntill Christ, foureteene generations. Which triple distinction hath a great mysterie as we shall see.

The Iewes among other lawes were commaunded to obserue these three precepts, namely, to worship that God whom their fathers had worshipped. Secondly to choose no Priest of any other flocke then of their owne, that is, of ỹ tribe of Leui. Thirdly to choose no king but of their owne people. These three precepts do very wel agree in our Lord Christ, to wit, that he is that one God, that he is an eternall Priest, of our flesh & blood, & a King, our brother, who hath taken our nature vpon him: Who by his diuine power is able to help & saue vs, & being an eternal Priest, continually maketh intercession for vs. He is a King also, that he may defend & preserue vs, who is not to be feared of vs, seing that he is a man as we are, yea & was made a most contemptible man, that our hart might be wholy quieted & appeased in him our Sauiour, who can neuer forsake vs. Who were able to stand in the sight of God, & not be terrified, if that Priest did not stand before God? Who should defend vs, if he were not a King? Who should saue vs, if he were not God? How should he haue care of vs, if he were not a man, and our brother? with whom we may speake as wel as we may one with an other among our selues. O most gracious Sauiour, how wisely hast thou done all thinges? I knowe that thou art my brother, as it is in the Psalme: I will declare thy name vnto my brethren, as it is alleaged in the Epistle to the Hebr. Albeit thou art God, my Lord Christ, and king of heauen and earth, yet I can not be afraide of thee: for thou art my friend and brother. This is no hinderance vnto me, that I am a sinner, and thou holy. For if I had not bene a sinner, there had bene no neede that thou shouldest suffer punishment for me. I see also in thy genealogie that both good and euill are rehearsed, of whose posteritie thou wouldest come, that thou mightest comfort timorous and weake consciences, that they should confidently & cheerefully put their trust in thee, which hast taken away our sinnes. And that we might be certaine hereof, thou hast left vnto vs thy word, which assuredly declareth it vnto vs. *Psal. 22. 23.*

Why both good and euill are rehearsed in the genealogie of Christ.

Among ỹ Kings & Princes which Matthew rehearseth, some were exceeding euil, as we may read in the bookes of the Kings. Yet God suffereth them to be rehearsed in his genealogie, as if

they were worthy, that he should come of them. But he suffered not so much as one honest woman to be rehearsed therin. Fower women are named, which all had an euill report, and were counted lewd. As Thamar, of whom Judas the father of her husband, begat Phares and Zara, as in the first booke of Moses it is mentioned. Rahab is called an harlot in the booke of Iosua. Ruth was a heathen woman, of whom although we read no euill written, yet forasmuch as she was a heathen, she was despised of the Iewes as a dogge, and was detested of them. Bethsabe the wife of Urias was an adulteresse before she was maried to Dauid, & of her he begat Salomon. Which women are undoutedly therefore rehearsed, that we may see how God hath set forth as it were a certaine glasse vnto all sinners, wherein they may see that he would be borne of the posteritie of sinners, that the greater sinners we be, so much more certaine and greater refuge we might haue to so gracious a God, Priest, & King, who is our brother, in whom onely and in none other we are able to fulfill the law, & obtaine the grace of God: he came downe from heauen therefore, neither doth he require any thing of vs, but that we assuredly beleue that he is our God, Priest & King, and then all thinges shal be wel with vs. By him alone we become the sonnes of God, & heires of the heauenly kingdom, as S. Paule sayth to the Galathians: Ye are all the sonnes of God by faith in Christ Iesus. Here the hartes of all sinners may leape for ioy, that they are counted worthy of such a Sauiour. Must not he needes be regenerate, whose hart vnderstandeth and feeleth this? yea he is caried with a most ardent loue to leade a newe life, for he is inspired with the grace of God, inasmuch as he layeth hold of the promise of remission of all his sinnes.

Gen.38.

Ios.2.1.

By faith in Christ we become the sonnes of God, and heires of the heauenly kingdom. *Gal.3.26.*

If we will count vppon our fingers the persons rehearsed in this text, we shall finde them to be forty and two, which were in time past figured by the two and forty mansion places, which the children of Israell had, before they came into the promised land, as it is written in ỹ fourth booke of Moses. If we also will come into the promised land, which our Lorde Iesus Christ hath prepared for vs by his natiuitie, we must also occupie two and forty mansion places, that is, we must ceasse from our owne purpose, & be regenerate man by man, vntill we come to Marie and Iesus, there at the last we shall finde rest vnto our soules. But this natiuitie

uitie is hard: for our euill & corrupt nature is very loth to leaue her owne wil and purpose. And againe the case of nature is such, that no natiuitie can be without griefe, yet one hath more griefe, tentation and affliction then an other. The theefe on the crosse leapt at one leap two and forty degrees, and came sodainely to Christ. So did many Martyrs also, and other holy men. Notwithstanding none can goe so great a iorney with small griefe, vnlesse he be caried with a great winde, that is by the holy Ghost. We must goe fayre and softly from Abraham to Isaac, from Isaac to Jacob, and so forth. But we must begin at Abraham, that we may be found endued with like faith as he was, and obtaine the blessing promised vnto him, then we shall more easily and cheerefully goe from one Patriarch to an other. That is, we shal passe ouer one affliction after an other, vntill we be called out of this trauell and iorney vnto our rest. For a man must be so long exercised with afflictions, and so oft renounce his owne will, vntill at the last he be brought vnder, and his flesh by this meanes be subdued, that it may obey the spirit, and walke ioyfully in the will and obedience of God. Wherefore let no man purpose with him selfe to come vnto heauen by leading a quiet life, and following pleasure, thus Christ sayth in Luke: It is easier for a camell to goe through a needles eye, then for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And in the Actes of the Apostles Paule teacheth that we must through many tribulations enter into the kingdom of God. Againe, in Luke Abraham sayd to the rich glutton: Sonne, remember that thou in thy life time receiuedst thy pleasures, and likewise Lazarus paines: nowe therefore he is comforted, and thou art tormented. So it behoued Christ also to suffer & by the crosse to enter into his glorie. And S. Paule sayth: All that will liue godly in Christ Iesus, shall suffer persecution.

Why the godly must suffer afflictions in this world.

Luk. 18.25.

Act. 14.22.

Luk. 16.25.

2. *Tim.* 3.12.

Hereupon we may learne, that all that is poyson which is according to the lust of the flesh. Wherefore Paule sayth to ỹ Rom. If ye liue after the flesh, ye shal die, but if ye mortifie the deedes of the bodye by the spirite, ye shall liue. The spirit which is of God, is ready to suffer, but the flesh resisteth. This Iesus signified by his aunswer vnto Peter: when he shewed vnto his Disciples, that he must goe vnto Jerusalem, and suffer many thinges of the Iewes, and be slayne also, Peter tooke him aside, and sayd

Rom. 8.13.

The flesh striueth against the spirit.

Matth. 16.21

vnto him: Master, pitie thy selfe, this shall not be vnto thee. But Christ turned him backe, and sayd vnto Peter: Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou sauerest not the thinges that are of God, but the thinges that are of men. Here it is manifest that the reason of man doth flatly striue against the will of God. God will haue vs enter into glory by the crosse and persecution, but the flesh resisteth, and is troubled in afflictions. Moreouer they that are endued with the spirit of God, doe reioyce, if they be afflicted for God his sake, as it is writte of the Apostles: They departed, as Luke sayth, from the councell, reioycing that they were counted worthy to suffer rebuke for his name. Wherefore James sayth in his Epistle: My brethren, count it exceeding ioy, when ye fall into diuerse tentations, knowing that the trying of your faith bringeth forth patience: And let patience haue her perfect worke, that ye may be perfect and entier, lacking nothing. O how necessary is patience for a Christian man? that we may possesse our soules by patience, as Christ sayth in Luke, otherwise we shall lose them. Wherefore we must enter into a new kinde of life, and if at any time calamitie commeth, we must not by and by burst forth into euill speeches, & take it vnpatiently, but we must alwayes lift vp our hart to God, and beare his will with a patient minde, he will well deliuer vs in his time, when it seemeth good to him, and we must alwayes thinke, that he beareth a fatherly affection toward vs, euen when he sendeth persecutions, anguishes, afflictions, and aduersities, as the Epistle to the Hebrewes sayth: Ye haue forgotten the exhortation, which speaketh vnto you as vnto children: My sonne, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither faint whē thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loueth, he chasteneth: and he scourgeth euery sonne that he receiueth. If ye endure chastening, God offereth him selfe vnto you as vnto sonnes: for vvhat sonne is it, vvhom the father chasteneth not? If therefore ye be vvithout correction, vvhereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sonnes. God giue vs his diuine grace, that we may courageously passe these two and forty degrees, & with the Lord Christ be regenerate into a new life.

Amen.

Act.5.41.

Iam.1.2.

Luk.21.19.

God euen when he chasteneth and correcteth vs, doth loue vs, and care for vs.

Heb.12.5.

A

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER VPON THE HYMNE OF ZACHARIAS, COMMONLY CALLED BENEDICTVS.

Luke 1.

Verse 68. BLessed be the Lord God of Israell, because he hath visited and redeemed his people.

THat godly man Zacharias speaketh here of things as already done, when he sayth: he hath visited and redeemed his people, &c. For he was certaine of them: now the childe John was come, being about to begin to preach of our redemption, as the Angell had foretold of him, that he should goe before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias, to turne the hartes of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisedom of the iust men, to make ready a people prepared for the Lorde: this promise he knew should assuredly come to passe.

Wherin this redemption consisteth, I thinke it is already sufficiently knowne vnto you, namely in this, that God visiteth and deliuereth vs. Which visitation and deliuerance is accomplished neither by sworde nor violence, but by the worde alone wherein consisteth more, then in the blood and death on the crosse. * For because of the worde Christ shed his blood on the crosse. It was the word that John preached, when he shewed the Lambe of God which taketh away the sinnes of the worlde, that is, when he declared our visitation and redemption, which Christ hath purchased with his blood. This John was the first Messenger which preached the Gospel. Wherefore to vs, to whom the Gospel was not before preached, it is, as if John him selfe did nowe preach it, for now is first set forth vnto vs redemption, sweete consolation, deliuerance from sinnes, death, hell, and all euill. To visit is no-

* That the word & promises of God might be accomplished and fulfilled.

thing elſe, then to come vnto vs, to bring and declare vnto vs the woꝛd of ſaluation, by which we are ſaued.

Zacharias conceiued ſo great ioy and pleaſure in his hart, that he could not cõtaine him ſelfe, but he muſt needes burſt foꝛth into thoſe woꝛds which in this Hymne he vttereth, not onely becauſe of the infant newly boꝛne, although euen this bꝛought great ioy vnto him, but alſo foꝛ that by the birth of this child he beholdeth a farre greater ioy, foꝛaſmuch as he was a Meſſenger ſent of God to pꝛeach his woꝛd to the woꝛld. He reioyceth therefoꝛe becauſe of ſuch a woꝛd which he ſhould heare, and foꝛ that he ſhould be as it were altered from an olde man to a ponge man, and ſhoulde become a ſcholer of an infant now lying in the cradle, whom he confeſſeth to be a Pꝛophet better learned then him ſelfe. Manifeſt naturall ioy is here, foꝛ that that infant was boꝛne after a meruelous ſoꝛt. Moꝛeouer here is ioy of the ſpirit, inaſmuch as that infant ſhould become a Pꝛeacher of the woꝛd of God. And I am of that mind that I thinke that there was neuer any father, which conceiued ſo great ioy of his childe, as this Zacharias did of his ſonne being ſo meruelouſly boꝛne by the power of God, and foꝛ that eſpecially in the time of olde age, when he was nowe neare vnto death, he is made a father of ſo great a Sainct, which ſhould be a maiſter and teacher of the woꝛld. It is a delight and pleaſure vnto vs, if we beget a childe that is ſound, fayꝛe, and wel pꝛopoꝛtioned in body, that I may ſay nothinge, what ioy it woulde bꝛing, if our childe ſhould be an Apoſtle and Pꝛeacher of ꝑ woꝛd of God to the woꝛld. Whatſoeuer ignominie therefoꝛe and contempt he did ſuffer befoꝛe when he was barren together with his wife Eliſabet, he is now moſt abundantly recompenſed with plẽtifull honour and ioy, ſo great bleſſings doth God beſtowe, if we patiently abide his leyſure. Foꝛ if he at any time come, he commeth very rich and plentifull in giftes, and doth giue much moꝛe then we euer either wiſhed oꝛ hoped foꝛ.

Zacharias conceiued both natural and ſpiritual ioy at the birth of his ſonne Iohn.

Verſe 69. And hath rayſed vp the horne of ſaluation vnto vs, in the houſe of his ſeruaunt Dauid.

Theſe woꝛdes are not ſpoken of Iohn, foꝛ that he is not an boꝛne rayſed vp in the houſe of Dauid, foꝛ he was boꝛne of the tribe of Leui: but Chꝛiſt our Lord is of the houſe, and of the roꝛall ſtocke and blood of Dauid. Wherefoꝛe Zacharias doth not

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singe here, in the house of Leui, but that in the house of Dauid an horne is rayſed and lifted vp: and when Chriſt was not yet borne, he neuertheles singeth ſo, as if he were borne, neither was the horne of ſaluation yet come, notwithſtanding he knew by the reuelatiō of the holy Ghoſt, that it ſhould forthwith come. An horne among the Hebrewes ſignifieth power, confidence, dominion, and that whatſoeuer, wherein any man may truſt, &c. As we reade in Daniel chap. 7. where the Prophet firſt ſeeth kingdoms, then beholdeth beaſts, ſome hauing one horne, ſome two hornes. And he afterward interpreting him ſelf, expoundeth them for kingdoms and Kinges: and this is a phraſe and maner of ſpeaking peculiar to this language. Nowe Zacharias ſignifieth that Chriſt is our head, yea our God, whoſe kingdom is his horne.

An horne what it ſignifieth among the Hebrewes.

He addeth: the horne of ſaluation, or bleſſednes. Some kingdoms are famous in name and power, other are large, abounding with plentie of greate treaſures, much people, honours, and all temporall thinges: But this is called a kingdome of ſaluation, grace, life, righteouſnes, truth, and of euery thinge that pertayneth to ſaluation, whereby it differeth from all other kingdoms. For albeit they be large, riche or mightie, yet are they counted the kingdoms of death, for they that gouerne them muſt at the laſt fall, dye, periſh, and leaue their power and riches behind them. Neyther was there euer any worldely kingdome which might be called a kingdom of life, wherein is life, peace, and ſaluation, for onely the kingdome of Chriſt doth glory and triumph in this title, inaſmuch as God hath rayſed it vppe, that there may be nothing in it but ſaluation and felicitie. Moreouer I finde nothing here ſpoken of maners and trades of life, or of workes: For this kingdome conſiſteth neyther in outward life nor workes, but in the horne, in Chriſt, and his Goſpell. This kingdom is ours, whereof ye haue heard, that it is a kingdom of grace, life, righteouſnes, ſaluation and mercy, ſo that whoſoeuer is in it, although he be inferior to Iohn in holines, and farre vnlike Chriſt in perfection, yet he liueth in a kingdom wherein is nothing but ſaluation and bleſſednes, whereof alſo it hath and reſerueth the name.

What difference there is betwene other kingdoms & the kingdom of ſaluation which God hath rayſed vp.

It is ſayd moreouer that this kingdom is rayſed vp in ỹ houſe of Dauid: but by what meanes was it rayſed vp? euen by the holy Ghoſt, and by his worde. He ſayth, in the houſe of Dauid,

for it muſt be a kingdome in the earth, and yet a kingdome of ſaluation. Nowe conferre theſe two one with an other. The houſe of Dauid is the tribe and ſtocke of Dauid, who was a man, as the ſubiects of his kingdom. So that thou canſt not ſay, that he doth here make mention of an heauenly kingdome amonge the Angells, when as he doth nothing leſſe, but he ſpeaketh of a certaine kingdome which is amonge men, which liue clothed with fleſh. Dauid was a man, the ſubiects of his kingdome alſo were men, ſubiect to death. For as the Scripture witneſſeth, man that is borne of a woman liueth but a ſmall time, he can not paſſe the boundes appoynted him. Howe is it then that honour and dishonour come together in this kingdom? What agreement and conſent appeareth here, where mortall men are deliuered from the power of death, where they that are worthy of death, enioy life, the vnhappy are happy, and they that are ſubiect to Satan, become the ſonnes of God? In the reaſon hereof I hope that ye are ſufficiently inſtructed, yea I thinke that ye vnderſtand it as well as I my ſelfe. But becauſe the text ſo requireth, it muſt be eftſoones repeated.

A Chriſtian is deliuered from death, ſinne, & Satan.

We haue affirmed therefore, that a Chriſtian which liueth in this kingdom, ſhall neuer dye, foraſmuch as he can not dye. For Chriſt hath therefore ſuffered deathe, that he might ouercome death, and deliuer vs from it. He tooke our ſinnes alſo vpon him ſelfe, that we might not neede to beare them. Moreouer he ſubdued and ouerthrew Satan, that we might not be ſubiect vnto him. Wherefore it is giuen to a Chriſtian that he can neuer dye, he can neuer be ſubiect to ſinne and the deuill. For that muſt needes be true which he ſayth, that he hath rayſed vp an horne of bleſſednes or ſaluation. And in whatſoeuer place that horne ſhall be, there is no acceſſe neither for death, neither for ſinne, nor the deuill. And that in the houſe of Dauid. Wherefore a Chriſtian is both defiled and yet without ſinne, and free from Satan. Howe commeth this to paſſe? After this ſorte. Your brotherly charitie hath oftentimes heard heretofore, that God leaueth in vs an appearance and feeling of death and the deuill, ſo that my ſinne diſquieteth me and troubleth my conſcience, and would driue me vnto deſperation. Moreouer the iudgement of God terrifieth me, death aſſaileth me, as if it would deuoure me. Satan is at hande and ſeeketh to ſuppreſſe me. God ſuffereth theſe to remaine & taketh

A Chriſtian after a ſort ſubiect to death, ſinne, and Satan, & why.

keth them not quite away. For this appearance must continue, that we may perceiue and feele that we are nothing else of our selues but sinners, subiect to sinne and Satan. And yet vnder this appearance lieth hid, life, innocencie, and dominion and victorie ouer sinne, Satan, hell, &c, as Christ him selfe sayth Matth. 16. Thou art Peter, and vpon this rocke will I build my Church, & the gates of hell shall not preuaile against it, he sayth not, they shall not assaile it, nor fight against it: for these two remayne to sinne and death.

Nowe it is also expedient that I feele the biting of sinne, the terrour of the wrath of God, the horrour of death, yea and death it selfe. But all this is a certaine outward appearance before my sight and the sight of the world, which knowe and iudge none otherwise, but that sinne, death, and Satan are present. Notwithstanding in the meane season vnder that assault and terrour the word and spirit are, encouraging me, preseruing me, & assuring me, that God is not angry with me, that my sinne is forgiuen me, that I shall neither dye, nor be forsaken: Vpon this foundation & hope my hart doth wholy rest. And no man hauing such a confidēce in God, remaineth vnder sinne, neither is drowned in death, but is made a conquerour of sinne and death. This is, not to preuaile or ouercome, for that albeit Satan attempteth, yet he doth not get the victorie. We call the house of Dauid, a mortal house, sinnefull, and subiect to the deuill, according to the maner of all flesh and blood, and yet notwithstanding the horne of saluation is raysed vp in the same, that men of that kingdom may enioy saluation and felicitie. Hereby ye see that this kingdom is the kingdom of faith, which can not be touched nor outwardly perceiued of any, which one can not shewe to an other, but euery one must haue it in him self, that when he shall draw neare vnto death, shal feele sinne, or euen see death before him, he may then in faith lay hold on this kingdom, & beleue that his sinnes are forgiuen him. For Christ therefore died, that thou mightest be in this kingdom of faith. Wherefore sinne shal encounter with thee in vaine, death is taken away, Christ is with thee, who can hurt thee, who can do any euill vnto thee? Here life and death, sinne and innocencie, Christ and Satan doe fight one with an other, but Christ, life, & innocencie doe ouercome and conquer. This is soone spoken, but not so easily felt, yea the contrary surely is rather felt. Where-

The cōfort of Christians against sinne death, and Satan.

The kingdom of faith

fore if thou wilt esteeme and consider this kingdom according to the iudgement of the world, thou shalt vtterly erre and be deceiued. The world calleth that a good & peaceable kingdom, where all thinges are quiet, prosperous and goe well forward, where is safetie, peace, and innocencie outwardly. But here is the kingdom of saluation and grace, although it alwayes appeare otherwise. Wherefore all these thinges are to be vnderstood in spirit and faith, & not to be iudged according to the person or outward appearance.

Neither ought it to seeme straunge that this kingdom doth flourish in the middes of sinnes, the force of Satan & death, whereof Zacharias here singeth euen from the bottom of his hart, and knoweth well how it commeth to passe, faith and the spirit reuealing it. Concerning sinne I haue seene or knowen none in whom it is not. Whomsoeuer thou settest before thee, sinne will by and by appeare. Paule a most holy Apostle affirmeth of him selfe, that he feeleth sinne in his members. VVill, sayth he, is present with me, but I find no meanes to performe that which is good. For I doe not the good thing which I would, but the euil which I would not, that do I. He wished in deede to be free from sinnes, but yet he could not but liue in them. And I and such like are also desirous to be exempted from sinnes: but that can by no meanes be brought to passe, we doe onely represse and keepe them vnder: when we haue fallen into sinne, we rise againe. But as long as we are clothed with this flesh, and beare the burden thereof about with vs, so long sinne is not extinguished nor can be wholy subdued. We may well goe about and endeuour to subdue it, notwithstanding old Adam will leade his life also, vntill he shall dye and come vnto the graue. What shall I needs to say any more? The kingdom of Christ is a certaine speciall kingdom, wherein euery one of the Sainctes is compelled to make this confession: Almighty God, vnto whose power all thinges acknowledge them selues subiect, I confesse my self to be a miserable sinner, reuenge not, I beseech thee my old iniquities. Al also must sing this song: Our father, &c. forgiue vs our trespasses, as we forgiue them that trespasse against vs. Other righteous & holy ones, which knowe no measure or ende of their righteousnes and holines, doe vnderstand nothing hereof, and therefore this Gospell is not preached vnto them, seeing that they thinke the kingdom of Christ to be such

Euen ỹ most holy are not free from sinne. *Rom.7.18.*

such, that there is no sinne at all in it, but that all thinges in it are cleane & pure: they require such a Christian as is wholy cleane from all filth of sinne, and without sinne as Christ him selfe, such a one they shall neuer be able to finde.

Now he is a Christian, who being a sinner, confesseth him selfe a sinner, who hateth the feeling of sinne, striuing against it from his hart. He is not a Christian which thinketh that he hath no sinne, neither feeleth any. But if thou knowest any such, he is an Antichristian, and not a true Christian. The kingdom of Christ therefore consisteth among sinnes, it is established there where he hath set it, that is, in the house of Dauid. Yea set Dauid him selfe before your eyes, and ye shal finde him to haue bene a sinner: who notwithstanding is bold to glory, that he is a seruant acceptable to his Lord. There is none of ỹ faithfull which ought to be ashamed of this maner of praying vnto God, or of any other not much vnlike vnto it: Lorde forgiue vs our sinne: is it therefore true that they haue sinne, because they say so? yea truely, for if they should lye, they should be the children of Satan. But godly Christians are weary of this life, greatly desiring the life to come. Now it is not giuen vnto them in this earth to goe so farre, that they may say: We are subiect to no vices, we are cleane from all sinne: if they shall goe so farre, it is Satan that deceiueth them. Notwithstanding they are sorie for their sinnes, and doe lament them, yea it grieueth them to the hart, that they must beare the miserable burden of this flesh, and they crie out together with S. Paule Rom. 7. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliuer me from the body of this death? This shrite & crie all the faithfull doe giue, for that feeling sinne, they doe most earnestly desire to be deliuered from it. And in this feeling & knowledge of sinne, the kingdom of Christ consisteth, so, that euen in sinne there is no sinne. That is, albeit I doe both acknowledge and feele sinne, yet saluation and the kingdom doe so firmely abide in my conscience, that God sayth vnto me: I will forgiue thee thy sinne, for that thou hast faith, and beleeuest in Christ my especially beloued sonne, who was deliuered to death for thee, neither shall thy sinnes hurt thee. Others, which feele not their sinnes, but trust in their workes, and complaine nothing of their faultes and offences, thinking them selues cleane: such are giuen to Satan, & not receiued or admitted into the kingdom of Christ: for they which

Though the godly haue sinne in thē and feele the grieuousnes thereof, yet it doth not hurt them.

are partakers of this kingdom can not be without conflicts and tribulation.

Death, Satan and the world doe somewhat trouble the godly, but the godly at the last ouercome them. *Psal.* 118. 18.

And that I may speake more plainly, recken I pray thee, any of the Sainctes, whom death doth not trouble: yea I know thou shalt not finde one, which is not afraid, and trembleth not at the horrible sight of death. But the conscience taketh comfort here by the Prophet Dauid, who sayth: The Lorde hath chastened and corrected me, but he hath not giuen me ouer vnto death: it fighteth against vs in deede, but it preuaileth not. Thus a Christian wrapped in sinnes, is both vnder sinnes and aboue sinnes, & at the last notwithstanding obtaineth the victorie. After the same sort also must he haue to doe with Satan, with whom he must wrastle all his life, and at the last ouercome him. So in the world also he must suffer many conflicts and troubles, and yet at length become victor. For although it be a kingdom of saluation, which hath neither rest nor quietnes, but suffreth the force of hel, death, the deuill, sinne, and all maner of aduersitie and tribulation, yet they which be in it, doe with an inuincible courage endure, and at length ouercome all euills. But God therefore permitteth these thinges, that our faith may be exercised, and shew forth it selfe. Moreouer that is a pleasure to the conscience, and bringeth vnto it comfort and ioye, that it hath such a kingdom, that it may say: Blessed be the Lord God, who hath visited and redeemed vs, and hath raised vp a kingdom in the house of Dauid. That is, for that he visiteth vs by his word, deliuereth vs from sinnes, and maketh vs conquerours ouer death and Satan.

Thus he haue heard both that a kingdom is raysed vp in the house of Dauid, and also that a Christian is both dead and yet aliue, is innocent in the middes of sinnes, and although he be subiect to Satan, yet notwithstanding hath dominion ouer Satan. For both are true, for that sinne, death, hell doe assaile the flesh, but doe not ouercome, forasmuch as this kingdom of saluation triumpheth ouer them all. Wherefore as it were with a certaine great boldnes or confidence he calleth it a horne, that is a stronge and puissant kingdom: Which hath no rest or truce, but being assailed of many and stronge enemies, is alwayes diligently occupied in defence of it selfe, and doth notably repell the force of ỹ enemie. So a Christian laying hold on this horne, ouerthroweth sinne, death, and Satan. Neither consisteth this horne in our strength,

strength, neither are we makers thereof: for God hath made and rayſed it vp by the ministerie of his worde, whereby we are saued. Wherefore Zacharias so singeth, that his songe hath respect not to his own sonne, but to Christ. Yea he celebrateth this kingdom as pertaining to the Iewes onely, and declareth that it shall be glorious, and maketh no mention of the Gentiles, how they also should come vnto it, as beside others, Simeon in his song, the beginning whereof is, Lorde nowe lettest thou, &c. did prophecie, that we Gentiles also are chosen into that kingdom. But here he foretelleth of a kingdom rayſed vp of God to the Iewes, euen a kingdom of saluation and blessednes, and that in the house of his seruaunt Dauid. Wherefore he sayth moreouer:

Verse 70. As he spake by the mouth of his holy Prophets: which haue bene since the world began.

Therefore he hath raised vp this kingdom, that he might confirme his promise, whereby he had foretold that he would sometime rayse vp a kingdom, &c. And now that time is come, wherein he will fulfill that his promise. So Zacharias reduceth ỹ horne of saluation, the kingdom of Christ, to the olde Testament, that out of it he may bring witnesses of so strong and puissant a kingdom. For the Prophets from the time of Dauid did all prophesie, that the seede of Dauid should haue a kingdom in the earth, yet a spirituall kingdom: and aboue the rest Esai and Ieremie foretold, that it should be such a kingdom, that the gouernment thereof should consist in the spirit & worde, to these especially Zacharias hath here respect. The other as Osee, Micheas, and the rest, doe speake of the same kingdom, but not so manifestly.

The Prophets foretold of the kingdom ỹ should be rayſed vp in the house of Dauid.

Verse 71. That he would deliuer vs from our enemies, and from the handes of all that hate vs.

The Euangelist hath hitherto generally rehearsed, what that kingdom of Christ is, whereof the Prophets prophesied. Nowe he speaketh of it also, but particularly, declaring wherein it consisteth. First in this, that he deliuereth vs from the handes of our enemies, yea and from all them that hate vs. Ye see here and vnderstand, most dearely beloued, that this verse doth witnes & most

Wherein this kingdom of saluation consisteth.

plainely declare, that we which are his people and kingdom, doe liue amongst enemies, and that no other is to be looked for of vs but to be hated of them: That also the force, qualitie, and nature of this kingdom consisteth in this, that it deliuereth vs out of the handes of all them that hate vs, as the Prophet Dauid sayth Psal. 110. The Lord shall send the rod of thy power out of Sion: be thou ruler in the middes of thine enemies. And Psal. 45. Thine arrowes are very sharpe, euen in the middes of the Kings enemies. It is a delight vnto Christ that his kingdom is set in the middes of the light, yea and in the middes of the haters thereof. These things are written for our comfort, that we which mind to serue vnder the Prince of this kingdom, be so instructed, that we looke for no other then is here prescribed and set forth vnto vs: that we seeke not here to get vnto vs the fauour of the world, neither that we serue the world, and labour to haue no enemies therein. For the words of Zacharias declare that it is the quality of this kingdom to deliuer from enemies. Now if it deliuereth vs from enemies, and as it were draweth vs out of the hands of them that hate vs, surely it can not be a kingdom of peace, but such a kingdom as is subiect to the hatred and malice of the world. As ye see at this daye, that our enemies beare a deadly hatred vnto the light, which hath a litle shined forth, thankes be to Christ therefore. No man is any where so hated as a Christian. Both the Pope, and the furious Bishops with their false Apostles, also the raging Princes, moreouer the holy, learned, and wise of the world, all at this day doe most bitterly hate Christians. Neither are they content, that they be killed & slaine, but they would haue them extinguished and vtterly rooted out, that there may be no memorie of them, as they thinke, left among men. And this is the state, these are the badges, and cognisances of Christians: that when Satan by his ministers persecuteth vs, he thinketh quite to roote vs out. This verse also giueth vs to vnderstand, that Christ is our King, that he may saue and deliuer vs out of the handes of our enemies: which he notably performeth, and sheweth his power in the middes of the worlde, in the middes of the force of flesh and Satan, when as peace and quietnes is no where left to a Christian, but in his Christ alone. This also we must marke, that there is not one but many, which assayle & persecute Christians: but yet that we shall not therefore be destroyed,

The godly must looke for no peace or quietnes in the world.

ed, forasmuch as we haue one, which is stronger both then the world and the Prince thereof as Iohn sayth. Nowe whereas he promiseth vs, we know certainly, that he both will and is able to performe: we shall in deede feele the assault, but he will not suffer vs to be destroyed or ouercome, so that we hope and trust in him. It followeth moreouer:

Verse 72. That he might shewe mercy towards our fathers, and remember his holy couenant.

Verse 73. That is, the oth which he sware to our father Abraham that he would giue vs.

He will deliuer vs, not onely from all euill both of body and especially of soule, but also from our enemies, Satan, and men, & as a Christian must be as it were ouerwhelmed with all euills together, so also he shal be againe wholy deliuered from all euils. And he sheweth that this grace and blessing was promised to their fathers. Such is the maner of the Apostles also, that they often times haue recourse to the old Testament, as I haue sayd before, that God spake and promised by the mouth of the Prophets, &c. euen as Zacharias doth in this place. Some man may now say: They are dead, how therefore will he shew mercy vnto them? Againe, what neede is there to rehearse, that he woulde shew mercy to the fathers, when as it is declared in ỹ Prophets? But this is therefore done, that the truth of God may be shewed forth, and may be also approued vnto vs, that we shoulde not be ignorant, that those thinges are not due to our merits. In the first booke of Moses is mentioned, how God promised to Abraham, that in his seede all ỹ nations of the earth should be blessed. That is, that by Christ should come peace, grace, and blessing to all nations. Which promise was differred so long a time, that it appeared, that it was in vaine and abolished. So vnwise, as it seemeth to the worlde, doth God shewe him selfe in his matters, as though all thinges went backward. Notwithstanding howsoeuer it was delayed and seemed, yet it is fulfilled and performed whatsoeuer was promised to Abraham, and God hath not onely deliuered him from his enemies, but hath bestowed vpon him all good thinges, yea hath giuen him selfe vnto him, and all that he hath. And all this is therefore done, for that (as Zacharias here

An obiectiō.

The aūswer.

Gen. 22. 18.

sayth) this mercy and goodnes was before promised and confirmed by an oth vnto them, which are long since dead, when as we yet were not. He is mercifull therefore and fauourable, not because of our merits, as though he did owe it vnto our righteousnes, but of his onely grace, fauour, and mercy.

God both promised, & fulfilled his promise, not moued through any workes or merits of men, but of his meere grace and mercy.

These are horrible thundrings against our merits & workes, that we can not glory, that we haue deliuered our selues from sinnes, or that we haue deserued his goodnes, and the preaching of the Gospell. No, it is not so. Here is no place for boasting: but this text sayth, that thou, O Lorde, didst promise certaine thowsands of yeares before I was borne, that thou wouldest doe it. Who did then desire him, that he would giue vs those thinges, when he had determined with him selfe to giue them? And vpon this promise the Prophets are bold and doe stay them selues, for by it we attaine vnto true goodnes, that the mouth of euery one may be stopped, that he that wil glory, may glory in ỹ Lord. For thus the Lord may say: that thou liuest in my kingdom, that thou enioyest my goodnes & grace, it is not to be imputed to thee, but vnto me: I promised, and determined with my selfe to fulfill my promises, thou being ignorant thereof. And here the mouth of euery one is stopped. So at this day also none of vs, vnto whom, thankes be to God, the Gospel hath shined, can glory that we obtained it by our owne meanes, labour, endeuour, or good conuersation. For those which were counted the best workes, and the most excellent studies are disallowed and ouerthrowne, as to celebrate Masse, to ioyne him selfe to this or that hypocriticall sect, which they call an order, &c. These the Gospell condemneth and reiecteth, and how can I attaine to the Gospell by that which it reiecteth? Wherefore this standeth sure and certaine, that all that we haue, is of the meere grace and goodnes of God, so that with his honour and praise we may confesse, that we haue deserued farre otherwise, namely hell fire, if besides this he bestoweth any thing vpon vs, it is the gift of his grace and goodnes. And this is that which Zacharias sayth, that is was foretold by the Prophets, and both promised and confirmed by an oth to the fathers, that he would performe vnto vs the couenant made to Abraham. Thus he sayth to Abraham: By my selfe haue I sworne, *Gen.22.16.* sayth the Lorde, that in blessing I will blesse thee. And in thy seede, &c. Which words the Prophets diligently held, marked, handled,

hãdled, & alwaies trusted vnto them, for that he doth here solemnly sweare, that he might wholy assure vs, that he would poure forth his blessing vpon vs. And now the time is present, the hower is come, wherein, he hath sworne, that saluation should come vnto vs, as it is declared Mar. 16. Goe ye into all the world & preach the Gospell to euery creature: he that shall beleue & be baptised, shall be saued: but he that will not beleeue, shall be damned. Men surely haue not merited it, no not Abraham him selfe, who was not made partaker of the promise, seeing that he died long before the fulfilling thereof. In spirit in deede and faith he was partaker of it, but he liued not so long, til the Gospel was reuealed to ỹ whole world. The promise therfore was made vnto him, although, as I haue sayd, he looked not for ỹ fulfilling therof in this life. That is, his life was not prolonged vntill the preaching of the Gospell in the whole world, although in faith he obtained the Gospell for him selfe. Wherefore it can not be sayd, that that promise was due to his merits, otherwise he must haue liued in the earth vntill the fulfilling thereof, and a due price or reward must haue bene payd vnto him. But now the performing of the promise was after his death, so that euery one must needes confesse, that that promise was not made to Abraham because of his merits.

Abraham merited not the promise.

Againe, it can not be sayd, that the Gentiles which enioy this promise, haue obtained it by their merits, which then were not. God promiseth to the fathers and performeth not, he performeth to the Gentiles, to whom notwithstãding no promise was made, who all at that time were not. God will alwayes retayne to him self his honour, and be the same God, although the wicked world can not be so perswaded. He chasteneth, reproueth, rebuketh, prouoketh, stirreth, alloureth, doth whatsoeuer is to be done, but the worldlings rob him of his honour, and attribute it to them selues, that is, they will not acknowledge, that whatsoeuer they possesse or haue, it commeth vnto them by the only grace of God. When therefore we glory of such good thinges, & acknowledge not God to be the author and giuer of them, we make our selues as God, and him as our seruaunt. So he is dishonoured, and the honour attributed vnto vs. But albeit we make marchandize of his honour, yet he hath affirmed in the Scriptures, that he will keepe his honour and glorye onely to him selfe, that so

The Gentiles merited not the enioying of the promise.

he may be acknowledged to giue all things of his meere and only grace. These thinges he that beleueth, doth also receiue them: he that doth not beleue, shall at the lēgth receiue his due reward. Zacharias sayth moreouer:

Verse 74. That we being deliuered out of the hands of our enemies, might serue him without feare,

Verse 75. All the dayes of our life, in holines and righteousnes before him.

He hath defined the nature and propertie of this kingdom: that is, the couenant made with Abraham, that in his seede all the nations of the earth should be blessed, &c. Which words of blessing, thus sayth he, I will interpret vnto you, that being deliuered out of the handes of our enemies, we may serue him without feare all our life long in holines and righteousnes before him. Which to the world and our flesh sauoureth not well. For the world thus murmureth here: I had thought that he woulde haue giuen vs some pretious thing, as a purse well stuffed with money, a rich wife, fayre and bewtifull children, goodly houses, and whatsoeuer the world is delighted in. But now I perceiue it to be otherwise, I heare that we must without feare serue him in holines & righteousnes, and so please him. Wherefore it shall be meete that we apply hereunto spirituall eyes and eares, that we may more rightly consider and vnderstand the wordes. Whereas he sayth, that he will deliuer vs from all our enemies, it is againe thus to be vnderstood, that this kingdom is placed in the middes of enemies, and notwithstanding that it is not therefore destroyed, but that alwayes all the enemies and aduersaries thereof are ouercome. We must vnderstand also that the deliuerance from our enemies tendeth hereunto, that we should alwayes obey him that deliuereth vs, without any feare. And this is a Christian thing, & an amiable kingdom, that a Christian shall leade his life without feare. Howbeit God hath bestowed this vpon vs, that we should hereafter serue him alone.

A Christian how he liueth without feare.

The words without feare, include in them, that we shall quietly enioy the good thinges of this present world, & of the world to come. For a Christian is sure and certaine of the forgiuenes of his sinnes, although he as yet feeleth them, as we haue sayd a little

tle before. He is certaine that death hath no power in him: that Satan doth not ouercome him: that the worlde can not preuaile against him. Such a hart is without all perill and feare, & plainly free from them. Which doe not thou so vnderstand, as though we do not feele sinne at all, but that we are greatly grieued when sinnes trouble vs, when the image or sight of death terrifieth vs, when as being reproched and slaundered of the worlde, we stand as destitute, and haue none in this earth, to whom we may turne vs or resort for succour, but God alone. These thinges in deede are felt, but they doe not preuaile nor ouercome vs: for the hart notwithstanding remaineth safe and quiet in God. So pouertie also is felt, when thou art pinched with hunger, & hast not wherewithall to fill thy belly, to maintaine thy wife and bringe vp thy children, nor any certaine place where to dwell and abide, but all these thinges shall not hurt thee: thou must aske of God whatsoeuer thou needest, & serue him without feare, as our present text declareth. But herein we doe for the most part behaue our selues not as Christians, we iudge after our owne affection and sense, according as the worlde doth blame vs, or report euill of vs. Also when our fieldes haue no corne, no money is in our purse, we thinke our selues vtterly destitute and forsaken. But a true Christian with shut eyes and eares sayth with Paule speaking to the Galathians: O flesh, sinne, death, ye are dead vnto me: and I againe am dead vnto you, that Christ may liue in me. The worlde is crucified vnto me, and I vnto the worlde. That is, the worlde hath no care or regard of me, and my preaching and life is mocked and scorned of it. But with the same measure that thou measurest vnto me, I will measure to thee againe: if thou despisest me, I also will despise thee: if thou makest no account of me, I againe will make small account of thee. *Gal. 2. & 6.*

What care I, if the worlde hate me, when as I displease not him that dwelleth in heauen? if this hatred continue euen dayly, if sinne rage, and the worlde talke and prate many thinges, what then? let it do so vntill it be weary, I wil passe ouer these things as if I heard them not. This is in deede to forsake the worlde, and to die vnto it, to liue without feare, to be occupied about no other thing, but that which is according to Gods will, to speake nothing at all but that which shall please him, and which I shall know to be agreeable to his worde: that I may liue so, and doe

those workes, which I knowe certainly are acceptable before him, that in my whole life whatsoeuer I doe either outwardly, or inwardely, I may be certaine that I seeke his glorye, and endeuour to fulfill his will. So I am separated from the world and notwithstanding doe still liue in the worlde. No man is lesse in the world then a sincere Christian: and againe, no man is more occupied and hath to doe with the world then an entire Christian. That is, the worlde doth more intentiuely looke vnto him, and Satan more often and vehemently assaileth him, then him that is ignorant of Christ, of grace, and of faith. Christ and Paule had experience hereof: they had combats & conflicts with the world: they were troubled and molested, yea the whole world was against them. Againe, a true Christian is not in the worlde, albeit the world rage & fret cruelly against him: for he alwayes trusteth in God, and sayth: Lord, I am thine, thou shalt deale wel with me, graunt thou that my matters may goe forward according to thy will, onely be thou on my side, and I shall be in safety.

All the dayes of our life. All our life long, that is continually, without ceasing.

In holines and righteousnes before him. Here S. Luke diuideth righteousnes and holines into two sortes: of which one is acceptable before God: ỳ other before him is of no value: wherby we haue to vnderstand, that both the righteousnes & holines of God are in no estimation before the world, euen as the worlde is wont nothing to esteeme God, and againe God litle to esteeme the world. For that which God calleth iust, the world calleth vniust: and that which it calleth right, God calleth crooked: and so these two Champions are continually at variance betwene them selues. That which God calleth holy, seemeth to the world deuilish and vnrighteous. Wherefore he comforteth vs here, declaring that there be two sortes of righteousnes and holines: One, which we ought to obserue diligently: An other which we ought to auoide. Hitherto it hath bene the chiefe holines and righteousnes of all, which could be inuented, to runne into Monasteries, to put on monkish apparel, to be shauen, to weare a hempten girdle, to giue him selfe to fasting and prayer, to be clothed with heare cloth, to lye in wollen garments, to obserue an austere maner of liuing: and in a summe, to take vpon him monkish holines and religion. And thus sticking in a colourable shew of good workes,

Hypocritical holines and righteousnes

we

we knewe none other but that we were holy from top to toe: hauing regarde onely to woꝛkes and the body, and not to the hart, where we were full of hatred, feare, & incredulitie, troubled with an euil conſcience, knowing almoſt nothing rightly of God. Thē the woꝛld cried openly: O that holy man: O holy and chaſt woman, which haue included them ſelues within the walls of Monaſteries, which day & night kneeling vpon their knees ſay many roſaries, as they call them. O, what holines is there, where euen God him ſelfe dwelleth, where the holy Ghoſt the comfoꝛter abideth preſent? Theſe thinges the woꝛld boaſteth of, and greatly eſteemeth. But beſide theſe they doe not marke, how they pꝛay with no earneſtnes of hart, howe they teach and inſtruct no man, howe they giue nothing to any, but catch vnto them ſelues both the blood and ſweat of the pooꝛe, and leaue true ſincere woꝛkes vndone. This righteouſnes & holines the woꝛld extolleth, which notwithſtanding ſtincketh and is wholy vncleane befoꝛe God, which he will haue euen to be vnknowne vnto vs, yet the woꝛlde refuſeth to admit any other.

The righteouſnes wher of God acceꝑteth, of what ſort it is.

But there is an other maner of righteouſnes then this where of God eſteemeth & accepteth, which alſo we muſt conſider, now it is of this ſoꝛte: It conſiſteth not in a graye garment, not in a blacke oꝛ white coule, but in a pure conſcience. To wit, when I beleeue, that Chꝛiſt is my ſaluation, and that my woꝛkes can pꝛeuaile nothing hereunto: but that he doth all thinges which God hath regarde vnto. Then I ſay no moꝛe: a gray garment is holy, a red garment is pꝛophane, foꝛaſmuch as I know, that not in a gray oꝛ any other garment, but in Chꝛiſt all thinges conſiſt. Foꝛ no man can attaine to this, that a gray garment may cleanſe his hart from filth, oꝛ that a monaſterie may purifie it: foꝛ it is neceſſary that God onely purifie the hart by faith, and the holy Ghoſt, as Peter witneſſeth Act. 15. When the hart is now pure, the houſe is vnto it as the fielde, and the fielde as the houſe: The market is as much eſteemed of it as the Monaſterie, and contrariwiſe. Neither remaineth there vnto me any woꝛke, place, oꝛ garment, which I count pꝛophane: foꝛ all thinges are alike vnto me, after that holines hath fully poſſeſſed my hart. That euen God ſayth vnto me: Thou art godly, I am thy father, thou art my ſonne. And herein we ought to perſiſt, that we be holy, and without feare doe obey and ſerue him. Here the title and badges

of a Christian are seene, & this is his cognisance, to wit, that being holy, he is the Minister of God without feare. But what sinner is there which dareth challenge to him selfe this title? Let one come forth, which dareth auouch him selfe to be godly, righteous, holy, and the seruaunt of God, destitute of no good thinges either of mind or body. Now he that cã not glory of these things, is not a Christian. For of these thinges must a sincere Christian be partaker. But what letteth that one dareth not challenge to him selfe this title? Euen a timorous conscience: for we alwaies feele sinne, and our life is euer fraile. I see nothing but an honest life, although God require this also of vs, yet he will not be content therwith, but there is neede that there be yet a certain higher thinge, that I dare be bolde to say: Lorde God maker of the whole worde, I am certaine that I am holy before thee, and am thy seruaunt, not for myne owne sake, who do as yet feele sinnes in my selfe, but through Christ, who hath taken away my sinne, and made satisfaction for me. These thinges surely I ought to glory of, if I be a true Christian.

But this seemeth difficult and hard: God admitteth no sinne, my fearefull and weake conscience is against me. How am I his seruaunt, when as notwithstanding I feele in my selfe, that I serue the deuill, and doe not knowe that I am holy? I speake not here of the common sort of Christians, such as I, and such like are: but of sincere Christians, which haue a good conscience, and in whose hartes the spirit of God abideth, whose conscience albeit it be fraple and weake, and they feele their sinnes, yet they are enforced to say: Howsoeuer sinne is, yet I know no sinne by my selfe, neither am I subiect to death and hell, and for this cause they striue, and at the last ouercome, that therefore they would euen die, in that confidence. But I finde it farre otherwise, if I set my life before my sight. Here life and the word must be separated farre asunder. If thou wilt consider life, I will set also before thee the liues of S. Peter, Paule, or Iohn, thou shalt finde euen them not to haue liued without sinne. When thou desirest to be holy before God, trust not to thy life, vnlesse thou wilt perish for euer. For thou must trust to onely mercy and grace, and not to life or workes, otherwise thy case will be very ill. Wherefore our hart must be so affected that it say: Lorde, if thou shouldest call me to an account, I should not be able either by life or workes to stand

We must trust, not to our life and workes, but to the mere mercy and grace of God

ſtande in thy ſight, no although I were euen Iohn the Baptiſt. Neuertheles therefore I glory that I am godly, & thy ſeruaunt, for that thou doeſt giue vnto me continually, and alſo for that, as thou haſt promiſed to Abraham, thou doeſt for thy Chriſts ſake, vouchſafe to ſhew thy mercy vnto me: if ſo be that I of my ſelfe be not godly and righteous, yet he is godly and righteous for me: If I be prophane, he is holy: if I be not ỳ ſeruaunt of God, he is the ſeruaunt of God: if I be not without feare and carefulnes, yet he is voyd of all feare and carefulnes: that ſo I may as it were transferre my ſelfe from my ſelfe, and perſe into him, & glory, that in Chriſt & by Chriſt I am good. Thus he will haue vs to glory, that we are godly and holy, but not by our owne merit: for we muſt glory of our ſelues, as of moſt deſperate wretches.

And that this may be plaine, marke our life, conſider our good conuerſation and maners, wepe how foolishly men apply them ſelues to the Goſpell, that I am almoſt in dout, whether I ſhould preach any more or no. For as ſoone as theſe thinges are taught in a ſermon, that ſaluation conſiſteth not in our workes or life, but in the giftes of God, euery one is slow to doe good, no man will liue an honeſt life, and be any more obedient, they falſly affirme euery where, that good workes are inhibited. Neuertheles God requireth of vs, that we lead an honeſt life outwardly, and he that doth not ſo, ſhall at length finde his due punishment. Nowe if it happen that we liue godlily and honeſtly outwardly, Satan by and by frameth his wickednes. Neither doe I know at this day how to order my ſelfe in this matter, not becauſe of my owne perſon, but becauſe of life. For if we preach of an honeſt and godly life, the worlde by & by furiouſly attempteth without iudgement, * to build ladders to heauen: which God neither can, neither will by any meanes ſuffer: Againe, a diſhoneſt and ignominious life doth not become Chriſtians, neither doth a delicate life become them. What therefore muſt we then doe? They which haue reſpect onely to an honeſt and fayre life, it were better for them to be adulterers and adultereſſes, and altogether to wallow in the myre. And yet notwithſtanding God will not haue vs to lead our life filthily and diſhoneſtly. For neither can he ſuffer that, adiudging thee euen vnto hell therefore, if thou ſo doe. And if thou lead an honeſt life, thou wilt ſticke in it, and arrogate vnto thy ſelfe,

* They endeuour by their good works to attayne to ſaluation.

We muſt neither preſume of good workes, nor neglect to leade a godly life.

which againe he can not suffer. Thou must therefore so prouide that thou remaine in the middle pathe, declining neither to the right hand, nor to the left, and that thou lead a quiet, fayre, and amiable life in the sight of the world: which also may be acceptable before God, and yet that thou doe not therefore so greatly esteeme it, nor count so of it, as though thou doest merit any thing of God thereby.

Thus a Christian continueth the holy seruaunt of God without feare, not by his good workes and holy life, but by the grace of Christ. But he that affirmeth that he is holy by his workes, is blasphemous against God, robbeth God of his honour, and denieth Christ, for whom it were better, that he were ten times an homicide, or an adulterer, then that he should thereby affirme him selfe to be a Christian, yea godly and holy: for he doth plainly dishonour Christ, and it is as much as to affirme that there is no Christ: for he is therefore called Christ, for that he is our grace, mercy, redemption, and holines. If I should not attribute to the diuine mercy, that God him selfe doth saue me, what should this be else, but to say, that he is neither holy nor blessed? Wherefore if I be a Christian, I must confesse, that I am holy and a Christian for this cause, for that Christ him selfe is holy. And albeit my conscience doth reproue me of sinne, yet I must still perseuer in this, that his holines is greater then my sinnes. Thus I must liue honestly outwardly, but inwardly rest and trust in him alone. It followeth moreouer how Zacharias turneth his speech to the child, and sayth:

Blasphemous to affirme our selues holy by our works

Verse 76. And thou child shalt be called the Prophet of the most High: for thou shalt goe before the face of the Lord to prepare his wayes.

This shall be thy office: Thou shalt be the first, and shalt first begin: that is, thou shalt be the Prophet of the most High: But what maner of prophecie shall that be, how shall it be done: After this sort: Thou shalt be the forerunner of the Lorde, & shalt prepare his wayes. When any Prince commeth, certaine goe before him, to prepare way and place for him, and say: Giue place, depart out of the way: John doing the like, runneth before and crieth vnto the people: Goe aside, turne out of the waye, giue place, the Lorde him selfe commeth. Such a seruaunt is John, whom

Iohn the forerunner of Christ.

whom the Lord by and by followeth. Such thinges no Prophet at any time hath spokē, but they haue prophesied of these things, that a Prophet should somtime come, which should erect a kingdom that should continue for euer, &c. But all dyed, not one remayned, which did behold this being aliue. But this Prophet doth liue euen at that tyme, when the Lord him selfe commeth, and by and by followeth him. For the Gospell was begon to be preached, Baptisme was begon to be ministred, by the comming and ministery of Iohn, who ceassing, Christ began, both almost in the same yeare. Now what shall be his office? This truely, to prepare a way for the Lord. Which preparation is nothing else, but to bring people to ỹ Lorde the Sauiour. Christ is the grace, gift, King and horne of our saluation. This Lorde and King no man receiueth, vnles he be first humbled, that he thinke nothing of him selfe. For he can not otherwise attaine vnto Christ, neither can stand together, to receiue the grace of God by gift, and also to merit the same. Iohn therefore in this part teacheth men nothing else, but that they are sinners and altogether nothing. He now which acknowledgeth him selfe, and feeleth him selfe a sinner before, yea and to be nothing, well vnderstandeth the voice of Iohn, which is, prepare ye a way for the Lorde: Giue place to him: He is at hande that followeth me, who is greater then I, him ye shall heare, him ye shall obey. The other office of Iohn which followeth, is, that he bringeth men to the knowledge of saluation, and sheweth with his finger that paschall Lambe, that taketh away our sinnes, that he may fasten them to the crosse with him selfe and abolish them. Whereof Zacharias now goeth on to speake. The office of Iohn.

Verse 77. To giue knowledge of saluatiō vnto his people, by the remission of their sinnes.

That is, thou shalt begin the office and ministery of the word, whereby is taught and learned how one is saued. Which saluation or blessednes consisteth in this, not howe we may be famous through great aboundance of riches, glory, and power in earth, as the Iewes haue hitherto vnderstoode it: but that we may obtaine remission of sinnes, and be made partakers of the grace of God. Now where remission of sinnes is, there is no merit, no reward or satisfaction, otherwise it could not be called remission of Wherein blessednes consisteth.

sinnes. So that this knowledge is, to vnderstand, how God forgiueth vs our sinnes without workes and merits, and saueth vs by meere grace and mercy, as it followeth:

Verse 78. Through the tẽder mercy of our God, wherby the day springe from an high hath visited vs.

Here it appeareth that they which teach and obserue lawes, workes, and merits, doe striue against both the mercy of God & knowledge of saluation. For he sayth not ỳ forgiuenes of sinnes hath come by the prayers or workes of the fathers, or of any of the Sainctes, but through the bottomles mercy of God, which Luke calleth the tender mercy, and such mercy as commeth from the most inward affection and bowells. Notwithstanding this forgiuenes of sinne, which commeth vnto vs by mercye, is not without merit, although it commeth to passe without our merit: but a Mediatour commeth betwene, who hath in our steede deserued it for vs, which is Christ our Lorde. For God would that satisfaction should be made vnto him for our sinnes, and that his honour and lawe shoulde be performed, here we were able to doe nothing. But Christ alone both was able, and satisfied for vs who of the infinit mercy of the father, was sent for ỳ same cause, and that to vs, that he might dispatche it. Therefore he sayth, Through which infinit & bottomles mercy the day springe from an high hath visited vs. Without all dout it was no merit, but only vnmeasurable mercy, that Christ came to vs, and merited and obtained for vs such remission of sinnes vnto eternall saluation. Now he calleth him, the day springe from an hie, which signifieth vnto vs his diuinitie. And this is his meaning: on hie, that is, aboue all creatures, where nothinge is hier, but heighth alone, there is Christ in his diuinitie, as the morning or day springe. For he proceedeth from the father, as the beames doe from the sunne, whereof we haue elsewhere spoken at large.

Forgiuenes of sinnes cometh not by any merit or worke of ours, but through the tender mercy of God.

Verse 79. To giue light to them that sit in darkenes, & in the shadow of death, & to guide our feete into the way of peace.

Many of the fathers vnderstood this of Lymbus, as they call it

te: but Luke agreeth here with ỳ saying of Esai, where he sayth: The people that walked in darkenes, haue seene a great light, &c. His meaning therefore is this: Christ therefore came, that he might be the light of the world, and by the Gospell might enlighten mens hartes, and allure them to him selfe, which were held captiue vnder Satan in the blindnes and darkenes of incredulitie, that so he might guide our feete into the way of peace, that is, he might gouerne our conscience well, quietly and therefully in the kingdom of grace, that we may be afraid neither of Satan, neither of sinne, death, hell, nor of any aduersitie, who heretofore haue rested, parte of vs in filthy vices, parte in good workes, notwithstanding we could on neither side enioy any quietnes or peace, but were compelled to despeire vnder Satan, and the feare of death, neither did we knowe howe to finde that way which leadeth vnto peace, according to the saying of the foureteenth Psalme: The way of peace haue they not knowne, &c. Thus ye haue heard how Zacharias doth in most goodly and fit wordes most liuely paint out the Gospel and kingdom of Christ, with all the frutes, colours & conditions thereof, that it is a word and kingdom of grace, of forgiuenes of sinnes, also a kingdom of peace, ioy, quietnes, saluation and all goodnes. God graunt, that we may throughly know and feele the same. Amen.

Esai. 9. 1.

How Christ is the light of the world.

How Christ guideth our feete into the way of peace.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER OF THE MEDITATION OF CHRIST HIS PASSION.

First, some doe so thinke vpon ỳ passion of Christ, that they are incensed with anger against the Iewes, and doe inueigh against wretched Iudas in songes and reprochfull wordes: and thus they are content, and thinke this to be sufficient, euen as they are wont in lamenting the case of other, to take pity

on them, and to accuse and condemne their aduersaries. But that can not be called a remembring of the passion of Christ, but rather of Iudas and Iudas his wickednes.

Secondly, some haue noted in their mindes diuerse commodities and frutes proceeding of the meditation of Christes passion, that saying which is ascribed to Albertus being commonly in their remembrance, that it is better to thinke vpon the passion of Christ superficially or once, then if one should fast the space of a whole yeare, and daily in praying goe ouer the whole Psalter, &c. That they follow hitherto, being blind and iustly stumbling, contrary to the true frute of the Lordes passion. Moreouer they seeke their owne thinges therein, and therefore they bringe with them images, bookes, letters and crosses. Some also go so farre, that they thinke they shall make them selues safe from waters, terrors, fire, and from all daunger, as though the Lordes suffering should be without suffering in them, contrary to the quality and nature thereof.

Thirdly, some haue compassion of Christ, lamenting & weeping for him as being an innocent man, like vnto the women which followed Christ from Ierusalem, who were reprehended and admonished of him, that they should weepe for them selues & for their children.

How the passion of Christ ought to terrifie vs.

Fourthly, some so call to mind the passion of the Lord, and so consider Christ, that inwardly they are sore afraid, yea their reason also or vnderstanding is turned into a certaine astoniednes or bashfulnes. Which feare notwithstanding ought to proceede from hence especially, in that we should be put in mind thereby of the wrath and immutable seueritie of God prepared for sinnes & sinners, forasmuch as he would not graunt to his onely begotten and beloued sonne that sinners should be absolued and pardoned, vnles he did make so great a satisfaction for them, as he speaketh by Esay chap. 53: For the transgression of my people haue I smitten him. What shall come vnto the sinner, when a sonne so exceedingly beloued is smitten? It must needes be that there is an vnspeakeable and a most serious and earnest matter, where so great and excellent a person doth descend to doe good vnto him, & suffereth and dyeth for him.

Fiftly, reuolue deepely in thy minde, and dout not a whit, that thou art he which so tormented Christ, forasmuch as thy sinnes were

were moſt certainly the cauſe thereof. Thus S. Peter in the ſecond of the Actes, did ſtrike & terrifie the Iewes as it were with a certain lightning, when as he ſayd vnto them generally: whom you haue crucified, ſo that the very ſame day three thouſand mē were greatly terrified, and being pricked in their hartes ſayd vnto the Apoſtles: Men and brethren, what ſhall we doe? Wherfore when thou conſidereſt that his handes were pearſed with nayles, thinke that it was thy worke: when thou remembreſt his crowne of thornes, perſwade thy ſelfe that it was thy wicked cogitations, which cauſed it, &c.

Sixtly, thinke with thy ſelfe, that whereas one thorne pricked Chriſt, thou oughteſt worthely to be pricked with an hundred thouſand thornes, & that without intermiſſion, yea & much more grieuouſly: and that whereas one nayle pearſed the hands and feete of Chriſt, thou oughteſt to be grieued & moleſted with many moe and farre more ſharpe nayles continually, euen as it ſhall come at the laſt vnto thoſe, in whome the paſſion of Chriſt hath not bene effectuall but fruſtrat. For Chriſt who is the truth it ſelfe, will lye to no man, will delude no man, and that which he attempteth muſt needes be a matter of exceeding great importance and wonderfull high.

Seuenthly, ſuch feare Bernard had conceiued hereof when he ſayd: I did play abroad in the ſtreete, and in the Kinges priuie chamber ſentence of death was giuen vpon me. The Kinges onely begotten ſonne hearing this, layd of his diademe & came forth, clothed in ſackcloth, his head ſprinkeled with aſhes, & bare foote, weeping and crying out that his ſeruaunt was condemned to death. I beholding him ſodenly comming forth, am amaſed at the ſtraungenes thereof, I aske and harken after the cauſe. What ſhall I doe? ſhall I play ſtill and delude his teares? Alas (ſayth he) it is no time now to play, it is no time to be ſecure, when ſo weighty a matter is in hande. So he bad the women that they ſhould not weepe for him, but for them ſelues and for their children, and he adioyneth the cauſe: For if they doe theſe thinges to a greene tree, what ſhal be done to the drie? as if he ſayd: learne what ye obtaine by my paſſion, and howſoeuer thinges fall out, yet this is true and knowne among you, that the whelpe is ſometime ſmitten, that the bandogge or maſtiue may be terrified. So alſo the Prophet hath ſpoken: All kinreds of the earth ſhall

waile before him. He sayd not, they shall bewaile him, but, they shal waile before him. Moreouer they were sore afraid, of whom it is before spoken, so that they sayde vnto the Apostles Act. 2: Men and brethren, what shall we doe?

By consideration of Christes passion we ought to come to the knowledge of our selues

Eightly, that this affection may be wrought in vs, the Lords passion is very diligently to be considered of and meditated vpon, forasmuch as the most certaine profit thereof doth much consist herein, that a man may come to the knowledge of him selfe, and tremble and be troubled before him selfe: whereunto he that doth not come, hath not yet attained vnto the due profit of the Lordes passion. For the passion of Christ hath this proper and naturall vertue, to make a man like vnto him, that euen as he was grieuously tormented both in body and mind for our sinnes: so we also to imitat him must be afflicted in the knowledge of our sinnes. Howbeit the matter is not here done in many words, but in depe cogitation and earnest weping of sinnes. Take a similitude: as thou hast great cause to feare and tremble, if, when some malefactor is condemned, for that he hath killed the sonne of the King or Prince, thou in the meane season, singing and playing securely as being innocent, art terribly apprehended and conuicted, that thou didest suborne the homicide: So thou oughtest to become much more fearefull when thou doest reuolue in thy minde the passion of Christ. For albeit the wicked Iewes be now iudged of God and dispersed, yet were they Ministers of thy transgressions, and thou for a certainty art he, which with thy sinnes hast crucified and slayne the sonne of God, as it hath bene sayd.

A similitude.

What we must do that our meditation vpon Christs passion may be frutefull.

Ninethly, he that feeleth him selfe so hardned and dull, that the passion of Christ doth not terrifie him, neither bring him vnto the knowledge of him selfe, is in an ill and lamentable case: for Christes passion is not effectuall in him. But nowe it is a harde thing for thee to be occupied in these thinges, and earnestly bent to the meditation of them: wherefore thou shalt pray God that he will mollifie thy hart, and giue thee grace profitably to meditate vpon the passion of Christ, because it can not in any wise be, that the passion of Christ should be inwardly and rightly thought vpon and considered of vs, vnles God inspire it into our hartes. Yea, neither this meditation nor any other doctrine is therefore set forth vnto thee, that thou shouldest boldly rushe vpon it of thy selfe to fulfill it, but that thou shouldest first aske and desire the grace

grace of God, that thou mayst fulfil it, not by thine own strength, but by Gods grace. For hereof it commeth, that they of whom it is before spoken, do not meditate on the passion of Christ aright, because they desire not helpe of God thereunto, but rather trusting vnto their owne strength, and following their owne inuention, meditate vpon it altogether after the fashion of men, and after a slender and vnfrutefull maner.

Tenthly, if one should through ỳ grace of God meditate rightly vpon the passion of Christ, by the space of one day, or of one howre, yea or the space of a quarter of an howre, we would faithfully pronounce of him, that he hath done better, then if he had pined him selfe with fasting the space of a whole yeare, or had runne ouer the Psalter euery day. For this maner of meditation doth as it were chaunge a man, and almost regenerate him a new like vnto baptisme. Then in deede the Lordes passion doth his naturall, due and noble office, it killeth the old Adam, it driueth away all pleasure, ioy and confidence, which may be had of creatures, euen as Christ was forsaken of all, yea euen of his father.

Eleuenthly, seeing that such a thing is not in our owne power, it commeth to passe that we doe often times aske it, and yet do not by and by obtaine it, notwithstanding we must not therefore dispeire or cease. For that is sometimes giuen for which we haue not prayed, and that sometimes is not graunted for which we haue prayed, euen as it is the pleasure of God, and as he knoweth to be best for vs, for God will haue this gift to be free & without constraint.

We must not despeire or cease, though at the first we obtayne not that we pray for.

Twelfthly, when as a man thus knowing his sinne doth wholy tremble in him selfe, he must especially endeuour, that sinnes doe not still remaine in his conscience, otherwise meere desperation will come thereupon, but he must shake them of and cast them vpon Christ, and so vnburden his conscience. Therefore see againe and againe that thou doe not that which peruerse men do, which within the secrets of their hart do vexe & disquiet them selues because of their sinnes, & striue with them, that by good workes or satisfactions, by farre going on pilgrimage, or else by pardons they may become safe, and may be made free from sinnes, which can not be. And (alas) such a false confidence in satisfactions and pardons hath preuailed very farre.

Moreouer, then thou doest cast thy sinnes from thee vppon

What it is to caſt our ſinns vpon Chriſt.

Chriſt, when thou firmely beleueſt that he ſuffered & was wounded for thy ſinnes, and that he hath payd the ful ranſom and ſatisfaction for thē, as Eſaias ſayth chap. 53. The Lord hath thrown vpon him all our ſinnes. And S. Peter ſayth: who his owne ſelf bare our ſinnes in his body on the tree. S. Paule ſayth: He hath made him to be ſinne for vs, which knewe no ſinne, that we ſhould be made the righteouſnes of God in him. In theſe and ſuch like authorities thou muſt repoſe thy hope with all boldnes, and that ſo much the more, as thy conſcience doth more grieuouſly vexe and trouble thee. But if thou ſhalt not doe this, but preſumeſt that thou ſhalt be quiet by thy contrition and ſatisfaction, then thou ſhalt neuer come vnto quietnes, but at the laſt ſhalt fall euen into deſperation. For our ſinnes kept and medled with within our conſcience, and ſette before the eyes of our hart, are farre ſtronger then we, and doe liue immortally. But when as we ſee them layd vpon Chriſt, and to be victoriouſly conquered of him by his reſurrection, and doe confidently beleeue this, then they are dead and brought vnto nothing. And yet being layd vpon Chriſt, they muſt not remayne ſo: for they are ſwallowed vppe in the triumphe of his reſurrection. Soe ſayeth Sainct Paule: Chriſt was deliuered to deathe for our ſinnes, and is riſen agayne for our iuſtification, that is, he hath taken vppon him our ſinnes in his paſſion, and hath thereby payed the raunſome for them, but by his reſurrection he iuſtifieth vs, and maketh vs free from all ſinne, if ſo be that we doe beleeue this.

1. Pet. 2. 24. 2. Cor. 5. 21.

What we muſt doe when we can not attaine vnto this faith, to beleue that Chriſt died for our ſinns and roſe again for our iuſtification.

If thou canſt not attaine vnto this faith, thou muſt as it is a litle before ſayd, reſort vnto God by prayer, foraſmuch as this gift is in the hand of God only, who beſtoweth it when & vpon whom it pleaſeth him. Thou maiſt alſo ſtirre vppe thy ſelfe hereunto: firſt, not now conſidering the paſſion of Chriſt outwardly, (for that hath nowe fulfilled his function and hath terrified thee) but rather by pearſing inwardly and contemplating his moſt louing hart, with how great loue towards thee it is repleniſhed, which brought him hereunto, that he did beare thy conſcience together with thy ſinnes with ſo great and painefull difficultie. So thy hart ſhall waxe ſweete towards him, and the ſtrength & boldnes of thy faith ſhall be increaſed. Then hauing entred vnto the hart of Chriſt, aſcend higher euen vnto the hart of God, and conſider that the loue of Chriſt could not haue bene ſhewed vnto thee, except

cept the will of God by his eternall loue had so appointed, wherunto Christ by his loue toward thee did obey. There thou shalt find a diuine hart, a good hart, a fatherly hart, and (as Christ sayth) thou shalt be drawne vnto ỹ father by Christ. There thou shalt vnderstand this saying of Christ: So God loued the world that he gaue his onely begotten Sonne, that whosoeuer beleeueth in him, should not perish, but haue euerlasting life. For this is to know God aright, when he is vnderstood of vs, not vnder the name of power or wisedom (which is a terrour vnto vs) but vnder the name of goodnes & loue. Then faith & confidence may stand constantly, & man him selfe is as it were regenerate a new in God. *Iohn.3.16.*

When thy hart is thus established in Christ, so that thou art now become an enemy of sinne, and that by loue and not through feare of punishment, then afterward the passion of Christ ought to be an example vnto thee in thy whole life, and is now to be considered of in thy mind after a farre other maner then before. For hitherto we haue considered it as an outward thing which should worke in vs, but now we will wey it so, that something is to be done of vs also. For examples sake: when griefe or infirmity doth molest thee, thinke howe light these are being compared to the crowne of thornes and the nayles of Christ. When thou must either do or leaue of that which is grieuous vnto thee to do or leaue of, thinke how Christ was taken and bound, and led vp & downe. When pride tempteth thee, consider with thy self how thy Lord was mocked, and reputed among theeues. When lust & pleasure pricke thee, thinke with how great sharpenes the tender flesh of Christ was torne with whippes, and pearsed through. When anger, enuye, desire of reuenge moue thee, thinke with how great teares and cryes Christ did praye euen for his enemies, toward whom he might more iustly haue shewed him selfe sharpe and rigorous. When sadnes or any aduersitie whatsoeuer either corporall or spirituall troubleth thee, strengthen thy hart, & say: well, why should not I also suffer a litle sorrowfulnes, when as my Lorde did sweat blood in the garden for anguish & heauines. Surely he were a sluggish and an ignominious seruaunt, who, his maister lying at the poynt of death, would be held from him with a soft and easie bed. In the meditation of Christes passion we may finde remedy against griefe, pride, lust, anger, enuy, sorrow, trouble, &c.

Lo, thus a man may find strength & remedie in Christ against

all crimes and offences. This is truely in deede to meditate vpon the passion of Christ: these are the frutes of the Lordes passion, in which he that doth after this sort exercise himselfe, doth surely without comparison better then if he heard all passions of all superstitious Masses. Such also are called true Christians, which doe so represent the life and name of Christ in their life, as S. Paule sayth: They that are Christes, haue crucified the flesh with the affections and lustes with Christ. For the passion of Christ is not to be handled in wordes and outward shewe, but in deede and veritie. So S. Paule admonisheth vs: Consider him that endured such speaking against of sinners, least ye should be wearied and fainte in your mindes. And S. Peter sayth: Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for vs in the flesh, arme your selues likewise with the same minde. But such meditation is now growen out of vse and begon to ware rare, wherewith notwithstanding the Epistles of Peter and Paule are most aboundantly replenished.

Gal. 5. 24.

Heb. 12. 3.

1. *Pet.* 4. 1.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER OF THE FRVTE AND VERTVE OF CHRIST HIS RESVRRECTION.

It is not enough to know the historie of Christes passion and resurrection, but the vse and frute of them must be preached and knowen

WE haue heard in the treatise of the Lordes passion, that it is not sufficient to know onely the bare historie thereof. After the same maner it is not enough here to know, how and when Christ rose againe, but both the vse and the profit as well of his passion as of his resurrection must be preached and knowne, to wit, what Christ obtained for vs by them. For where the onely deede of the historie is preached, it is a friuolous preaching and without all frute, which both Satan and the wicked doe as well know, reade, and vnderstand, as we doe. But when as the vse of them

them is preached, and whereunto they profit, that in deede is a frutefull and wholsom Sermon, and full of sweete consolation. Wherefore Christ him selfe hath declared the vse and profit of his passion and resurrection, when he thus talked with the women Matth. 28: Be not afraid: Goe and tell my brethren that they goe into Galile, and there shal they see me. And this is the first word, which they heare of Christ after his resurrection from the dead, whereby he confirmeth all his sayinges, also all his benefits shewed vnto them before, to wit that they should come vnto vs also that should beleue in him, and pertaine onely to the beleuers, for that here he calleth not onely the Apostles his brethren, but also all them which beleue in him, although they doe not see him visibly as the Apostles did. He doth not differre vntill we pray vnto him and call vppon him, that we may be made his brethren. Let any of vs now come forth, and boast of his merit, or of the strength, whereby he is able to merit any thing. What had the Apostles merited? Peter denied Christ thrise. All the rest of the Disciples did flie away from him, they did perseuer and stand by him, euen as the hare tarieth with her yong ones, he might haue called them runawayes, and forsakers of their standing in the middest of their conflict, yea traitors and wicked men, rather then brethren. Wherefore of meere grace and mercy this worde was brought vnto them of the Patrones, which the Apostles them selues did then well perceiue, and we also doe throughly feele, when we are set in the middes of sinnes, and are ouercome of damnation.

The Apostles merited nothing at all, that Christ should call them his brethren.

This word therefore is ful of all consolation and comfort, that Christ careth for such wretched men as we are, yea and that he doth call vs his brethren. If so be that Christ be our brother, surely I would fayne know what good thing we shall want. As therfore the case standeth among carnall brethren, so doth it stand here. They that are germane brethren by consanguinitie, do vse goods common among them selues, hauing the same father, the same inheritance, otherwise they were not brethren. So we also possesse common good thinges with Christ, enioying the same father, the same inheritance, which inheritance is not diminished by parting it, as worldly inheritances are, but is alwayes made more aboundant: for it is a spirituall inheritance. A corporall inheritance, when it is distributed into diuers parts, is made smal-

ler, but in this portion of the spirit, the case is such, that he that hath gotten part thereof hath obtained the whole. What is therfore the inheritance of Christ? In his power are life and death, sinne and grace, and whatsoeuer is contained in heauen and in earth, his are eternall veritie, strength, wisedom, righteousnes. All power is giuen vnto him, he hath rule ouer all thinges, ouer hunger and thirst, prosperitie and aduersitie, &c. he reigneth ouer all thinges that can be thought, whether they be in heauen or in earth, spirituall or corporall, and that I may speake at once: all thinges are in his power, as well eternall thinges as temporall. Now if I shall cleaue vnto him by faith, I shall be made partaker of all his good thinges, and shall not obtayne a part of the inheritance onely, but I shall possesse euen with him euerlasting wisedom, eternall strength. My belly shall not be grieued with hunger, sinnes shall not oppresse me, neither shall I be afraid of the face of death, neither shall I dread the sight of Satan, neither shall I want the plenty of any thing that is good, euen as he wanteth it not. Hereby now we may easily vnderstand the sayinges vttered commonly in the Prophets, & especially in the Psalmes, as where Dauid sayth Psal. 34: The Lions doe lacke and suffer hunger, but they that feare the Lorde shall want no maner of thing that is good: and where he sayth in an other place: The Lord knoweth the wayes of the righteous, and their inheritance shall endure for euer. They shall not be confounded in the perilous time, and in the dayes of dearth they shall haue enough. And againe: I haue bene yonge and now am old, and yet saw I neuer the righteous forsaken, nor his seede begging bread. All which thinges Christ bringeth with him, for that we are, and are called his brethren, not because of any merit but of meere grace. If we would print these things in our hart, ꝑ we might throughly feele them, it should goe well with vs, but they goe in at one eare and out at an other. This is that wherof S. Paule so greatly glorieth Rom. 8. As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sonnes of God. For ye haue not receiued the spirit of bondage to feare againe: but ye haue receiued the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father: The same spirit beareth witnes with our spirit, that we are the children of God: if we be children, we are also heires, euen the heires of God, and heires annexed with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we

The inheritance of Christ.

What they enioy that cleaue to Christ by faith.

we may also be glorified with him.

Moreouer this title ascendeth so high, that mans mind is not able to comprehend it. For vnles the spirit the comforter did impart this grace vnto vs, no man should euer be able to say: Christ is my brother. For reason can not be bold so to say, albeit one repeat it in wordes very often, as the new spirits doe. It is a higher thing then that it can be so spoken, for except the hart feele it, as it is requisite it should, it shall be nothing but onely flatterie. But if thou feele it inwardly in thy hart, it will be so excellent a thing vnto thee, that thou wilt much rather say nothing of it, then speake and talke of it, yea by reason of the greatnes of so good a thinge, thou wilt perhaps dout as yet and be in an vncertaintye whether it be so or not. They which onely cry out thus: Christ is my brother, are fanatical spirits, who vainly pronounce wordes without any frute. The case standeth farre otherwise and farre more marueloussly with a true Christian, so that he is thereby enforced to be amased, neither dareth he either say or confesse any thing sufficiently thereof. Wherefore we must endeuour, that we doe not heare this onely with fleshly eares, but that we feele it in our hart, for then we will not be so rash, but we shall be forthwith caried into an admiration thereof. True and sincere Christians enter into the viewing and feare of them selues, thinking thus: O wretched and defiled creature, which am drowned in sinnes, am I now made worthy, that the sonne of God should be my brother? how doe I miserable wretch attayne to such a thing? Thus he is by and by astonied, and doth not well vnderstand the thing. But a great studie and endeuour surely is required, that a man may beleue this, yea if it were felt, as it ought in very deede, a mã should forthwith dye thereupon. For he can not vnderstand it according to his flesh and blood, and the hart of man in this life is more narrow and straight, then that it is able to comprehend so great thinges. But in death, when the hart shall be stretched out, then I say we shall trie what we haue heard by the word.

In the Gospel of Iohn chap. 20. Christ doth farre more plainly declare vnto Marie Magdalen this vse and frute both of his death and also of his resurrection, when he sayth: Goe vnto my brethren and tell them: I ascende vnto my father and your father, vnto my God & your God, this is one of the most comfortable places whereof we may glorye and boast. As though Christ

should say: Marie, get thee hence and declare vnto my Disciples which did flee from me, which haue throughly deserued punishment and eternall condemnation, that this resurrection of myne is for their good, that is, þ I haue by my resurrection brought the matter to that passe, that my father is their father, and my God is their God. They are but a fewe & verie short wordes in deede but they containe great matter in them, namely, that we haue as great hope & confidence reposed in God, as his owne sonne him selfe. Who can comprehend such exceeding ioye, I will not say, vtter it? that a wretched and defiled sinner may be bolde to call God his father & his God euen as Christ him selfe. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrues chap. 2. did well remember the wordes of the Psalme, and weied with him selfe how it speaketh of Christ, who, as he sayth, is not ashamed to call the beleeuers, brethren, saying: I will declare thy name vnto my brethren, in the middest of the Church or congregation will I sing prayses to thee.

If any worldly Prince or noble man should humble him selfe so low, that he would say to a theefe or robber, or to one that is infected with the french pocks: thou art my brother, it would be a certaine notable thing which euery one would maruell at. But whereas this king which sitteth in glory at the right hand of his father, sayth of some poore man: this is my brother, that no man layeth vp in the bosome of his brest, neither doth any man consider of it in his mind, wherein notwithstanding our chiefe comfort and confidence consisteth against sinne, death, the deuils, hell, the law, and against all sinister successe of thinges as well of the body as of the mind. Moreouer, forasmuch as we are fleth & blood, and therefore subiect to all kindes of aduersitie, it followeth, that the case should stand so also with our brother, otherwise he should not be like vnto vs in all thinges. Wherefore, that he might be made conformable and like vnto vs, he tasted and had experience of all things euen as we haue, sinne only excepted, that he might be our true brother, and exhibite him self openly vnto vs. Which the Epistle to the Hebrues doth liuely set forth chap. 2. where it sayth: Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh & blood, he also him selfe likewise tooke part with them, that he might destroy through death, him that had the power of death, that is, the deuil, & that he might deliuer all thē, which for feare

Christ like vnto vs in all thinges except sinne

of

of death were all their life time subiect to bondage. For he tooke not on him the Angells nature, but he tooke on him the seede of Abraham. VVherefore in all thinges it behoued him, to be made like vnto his brethren, that he might be mercifull, & a faithfull hie Priest in thinges concerning God, that he might make reconciliation for the sinnes of the people. For in that he suffered and was tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. The profit, vse and frute of the Lordes passion & resurrection S. Paule hath gathered very briefly and as it were into one short summe, when he sayth Rom. 4: Christ was deliuered to death for our sinnes, and is risen againe for our iustification. Whereof thus much at this time shall suffize.

The frute of Christes passion and resurrection.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER OF THE GOOD SHEPEHEARD.

Iohn 10.

Verse 11. IEsus sayde vnto the Iewes: I am that good shepeheard: that good shepeheard giueth his life for his sheepe.

12. But an hyreling, & he which is not the shepeheard, neither the sheepe are his owne, seeth the woulfe comming, and leaueth the sheepe, and fleeth, and the woulfe catcheth them, and scattereth the sheepe.

13. So the hyerling fleeth, because he is an hyerling, and careth not for the sheepe.

14. I am that good shepeheard, and know myne, and am knowne of myne.
15. As the Father knoweth me, so know I the Father: and I lay downe my life for my sheepe.
16. Other sheepe I haue also which are not of this folde: them also must I bring, and they shall heare my voice, and there shall be one sheepefold, and one shepeheard.

His text is full of consolation, which in a goodly parable setteth forth Christ our Lord, & teacheth what maner of person he is, what be his workes, and of what affection he is toward men. Neuertheles it can not be vnderstood, but by comparing togither light and darkenes, day and night, that is, a good and an euill shepeheard, as the Lord also doth in this place.

The preaching of the law.

Ye haue nowe oftentimes heard, that God hath instituted and ordeined in the worlde two maner of preachings: One is, when the word of God is preached, which sayth Exod. 20: Thou shalt haue none other gods before me. Also: Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adulterie, Thou shalt not steale, & doth also threaten, that he which doth not keepe those precepts shall dye. But that preaching doth iustifie no man. For although a man be thereby compelled to shew him selfe godly outwardly before men, notwithstanding inwardly his hart is offended at the law, and had leuer there were no lawe.

The preaching of the Gospell.

The other ministerie of the word is the Gospell, which sheweth where that is to be receiued, which the lawe requireth, it neither vrgeth nor threatneth, but alloureth men gentlely, it sayth not: doe this or that, but it sayth thus: Goe too, I will shew where thou mayst receiue and take, whereby thou mayst become righteous: Behold, here is Iesus Christ, he will giue to thee. Wherfore these two disagree one with an other, as much as to receiue and giue, to exact and reward. And this difference is to be well vnderstood and marked.

To whom the law must be preached

To hardened and vntractable men, which feele not the Gospell, the lawe is to be preached, and they are so long to be vrged, till they begin to be mollified and humbled, and doe acknowledge their disease, which when it is done, there is then place to begin

to

to preach the Gospell. These two sortes of preachinges were instituted and ordayned of God, besides these there are other which were not ordayned of God, but are traditions inuented by men, ordained of the Pope and his Prelats, wherewith they haue peruerted the Gospell. These are not worthy to be called either shepeherds or hirelings, but they are those which Christ calleth theeues, robbers and wolues. For if we will rule and guide men rightly and well, that must needes be done by the worde of God: whereby if it be not done, we surely labour in vaine. Furthermore Christ encreateth here of that second ministerie of ẏ word, and describeth of what sorte it is: he maketh him selfe the chiefe, yea the onely shepeheard, for that which he doth not feede, doth surely remayne vnfed.

We haue heard that our Lorde Iesus Christ after his passion and death was raysed from the dead, is entred into, and placed in immortalitie, not that he might sit idle in heauen, and reioyce with him selfe, but that he might receiue a kingdom, might execute the function of a gouernour and king, of whom all the Prophets, yea & the whole Scripture doe speake very much. Wherfore he is to be acknowledged to be vnto vs continually a present gouernour and ruler, neither must we thinke that he is idle in heauen, but that he doth from aboue both fill and gouerne all thinges as Paule sayth Ephes. 4. who hath an especiall care of his kingdome, which is the Christian faith, hereupon it must needes be, that his kingdom doe florish amonge vs here in earth. Of this kingdom we haue elsewhere sayd, that it is so ordeyned, that we all encrease euery day and become purer, and that it is not gouerned at all by any force or power, but by outward preaching alone, that is, by the Gospell. And this Gospell commeth not from man, but Iesus Christ him selfe brought it, and afterward put it into the hartes of the Apostles, and their successors, that they might comprehend it, and into their mouthes that they might speake and publish it. Hereby is his kingdom gouerned, wherein he so reigneth, that all the power thereof consisteth in the word of God. Now whosoeuer shall heare & beleeue this, doe pertaine to this kingdome. Moreouer this worde is afterward made so effectuall, that it giueth all thinges which are necessary to man, & bringeth a certain abundance of all good things which may be had. For it is the power of God which is able to saue e-

The kingdō of Christ increaseth, not by force and power, but by preaching of the Gospell.

The force & efficacie of the word of God.

uery one that beleeueth, as Paul witnesseth Rom. 1: When thou beleuest that Christ died for thee, to deliuer thee from all euill, & so cleauest vnto the worde, it is sure and certaine that no creature is able to ouerthrow thee. For as none is able to ouerthrow the word, so none is able to hurt thee, when thou stickest vnto it. By the word therefore thou doost ouercome sinne, death, Satan, hell, and thither thou must resort and flie, where the word is, that is, to eternall peace, ioy, and life, and briefly, thou shalt be made partaker of all such good things as are promised in ỹ word. Wherfore the gouernment of this kingdom is marueleus: the word is published & preached through the whole world, but the power thereof is very secret, neither doth any man marke that it is so effectual, & that it so much profiteth them that beleue: howbeit it must be felt and tasted in the hart. We therfore of the ministerie are able to performe no more, then that we are the mouth of our Lorde Christ, and the instrument whereby he openly preacheth ỹ word. For he suffereth the word to be published abroad, that euery one may heare it. But faith maketh that it is felt inwardly in ỹ hart, yea and it is the secret worke of Christ, whensoeuer any knoweth that it is his duety, and is also willing to doe according to his diuine will and good pleasure.

But that this may be the better perceiued, we wil now intreat of our text, wherein Christ first sayth: I am the good shepeherd. And what is a good shepeheard? A good shepeherd, sayth Christ, giueth his life for his sheepe. And I leaue my life for my sheepe. Here the Lord declareth what his kingdom is, bringing a goodly parable of the sheepe. We knowe that it is a beast of all liuing creatures most foolish and most simple, so that thereupon it is commonly spoken as a prouerb, if we haue to speake of a simple one: He is a sheepe. Neuertheles it is of that nature more then other liuing creatures, that it quickly knoweth the voyce of his shepeheard, neither followeth it any beside his owne shepeheard, being alwaies of that qualitie that it cleauerh to him, and seeketh for helpe of him alone, being not able to helpe it selfe, neither to feede it selfe, neither to heale it selfe, nor keepe it selfe from the wolues, but doth wholy consist in the helpe of an other. Christ therefore bringeth the qualitie and nature of the sheepe in maner of a parable, and transformeth him selfe into a shepeheard, whereby he doth very well shewe, what his kingdome is, and

wherein

wherein it consisteth, and his meaning is this: My kingdom is nothing els, but that I may feede sheepe, that is, miserable, needy, and wretched men in the earth, which doe well perceiue and feele, that they haue no helpe or counsell any other where, but in me alone.

But that we may declare this more plainely, we will adde hereunto a place out of Ezechiel chap. 34. which speaketh of euill shepeheards that doe contrary vnto Christ, & sayth: Ought not the flockes suffer them selues to be fed of the shepeheards? VVhy therefore doe you feede your selues? Ye haue eaten the milke of the sheepe, ye haue clothed your selues with the woll, the best fed ye haue slaine, but my flocke haue ye not fed. The weake haue ye not strengthned, the sicke haue ye not healed, the broken haue ye not bound together, the driuen away haue ye not brought againe, the lost haue ye not sought, but with force and crueltie haue ye ruled them. And now my sheepe are scattered, for that they are destitute of shepeheards, yea all the beastes of the field deuour them, and they are dispersed ouer all mountaines, and ouer the whole earth. That which he here sayth is well to be marked: his very meaning in this place is, that he will haue the weake, sicke, broken, abiects, and lost, to be strengthned, healed, cured, sought, not spoyled and destroyed. These thinges ye ought to doe, sayth he to the shepeheards, but ye haue done none of them. Wherefore I my selfe (as he afterward sayth) will deale thus with my sheepe: That which is lost will I seeke againe, that which is driuen away will I bringe againe, and to that which is not well will I giue a remedie and heale it. Here thou seest that the kingdom of Christ is such as hath to doe with those that be weake, diseased and broken, & hath care of them to helpe them. The preaching whereof in deede is very full of comfort, but this is wanting in vs, that we doe not throughly feele our miserie and weakenes, which if we felt, we would forthwith runne vnto him. But how did those shepeheards behaue them selues? They ruled in rigour and straightly exacted obedience of the lawe. Moreouer, they added their owne traditions, as they doe also at this day, which if they be not kept, they cry out, and condemne him that transgresseth them, so that they doe nothing elle, but vrge more and more and commaund their owne inuentions. But this is not to feede wel or to gouerne

Euill shepeheards how they behaue them selues and gouerne their flocke.

a soule, as Christ sayth, who him self is not such a shepeheard, for by such maner of feeding none is holpen, but the sheepe are vtterly lost as we shall vnderstand.

Weake consciences how they must be handled.

Now we will handle the place of the Prophet in order. First he sayth that the weake sheepe are to be strengthned, that is, the consciences which are weake in faith, and haue a sorrowfull spirit, and are of a faint courage, are not to be enforced, that it should be sayd vnto them: This thou must doe, thou must be strong. For if thou be so weake, thou art ordayned to eternall punishment: This is not to strengthen ỹ weake. Thus saith Paule Rom. 14: Him that is weake in the faith receiue vnto you, & entangle not consciences. And by & by after he addeth Rom. 15: VVe which are stronge ought to beare the infirmities of the weake. Wherfore they are not to be seuerely compelled, but to be comforted, that although they be weake, they may not therefore despeire, for afterwards they shall become stronger. Esaias the Prophet did thus forespeake of Christ cap. 42: A brooſed reede shall he not breake, & the smoking flax shall he not quenche. The brooſed reede signifieth miserable, weake, and brooſed consciences, which are easily so shaken, that they tremble, and lose hope and trust in God. With these God doth not forthwith deale rigorously and after a violent maner, but he dealeth gently with them, lest he breake them. Moreouer the smoking flax, which doth as yet burne a litle, & nourisheth more smoke then fire, are the same consciences, which ought not againe to despeire, for he wil not vtterly extinguish them, but alwayes kindle them, and more and more strengthen them. Which truely to him that knoweth it, is a great comfort. Wherefore he which doth not gentlely handle weake consciences after this sort, doth not without dout execute the office of a true shepeheard.

Afterward the Prophet sayth: That which was diseaſed, ye ought to haue succoured. Who are those diseased ones? They which in their maner of liuing, and in their outward workes haue certain diseases, and vices. The first pertaineth to the conscience when as it is weake: the other to the maners or conditions of life, when as any being caried with a wilfull mind and wayward braine, doth offend here and there, to wit by wrath & other foolish doings, as euen the Apostles fel sometimes grieuously. Such as are so vitious in the sight of men, that they are an offence to o-

thers.

thers, and are iudged obstinate and wayward, God will not haue to be reiected and despeired of. For his kingdom is not ordered after such a maner, that the stronge and whole onely should liue therein (which pertaineth to the life to come) but Christ is therfore set in it, that he may haue a care of such & helpe them. Wherfore albeit we are so weake and sicke, notwithstanding we must not so despeire, that we should say, that we are not in the kingdom of Christ, but ỹ more we feele our disease, so much the more we must come vnto him, for he therefore is at hande that he may remedie and heale vs. Now if thou be weake and oppressed with faintnes, feeling great affliction, hereby thou hast gotten a greater occasion to goe vnto him, & to say on this maner: Most sweete Christ, I therefore come vnto thee because I am a sinner, that thou maist helpe and iustifie me: yea very necessitie doth compell thee hereunto. For the greater thy disease is, so much more needfull is it for thee to be healed. And Christ him selfe requireth the same of vs, and doth allure vs to come vnto him boldly and cherefully. But others which are not such shepeheards, do thinke that they shall make men righteous, if they exact much of them and vrge them much, whereby they onely make that which is euill worse, as we see it to be done at this day, whereas it is come to that disorder, that all thinges are most miserably brought out of course, as in this place the Prophet sayth.

The more we feele our selues diseased, the greater cause we haue to flie vnto Christ.

The broken haue ye not bound togither. To be broken is, as when ones legge is broken, or a wound some where else giuen him. That is, when as a Christian is not onely weake and diseased, that he stumbleth sometime, but also runneth into so great tentations, that he breaketh some part, and so is brought to that passe, that he falleth and denieth the Gospell, after the maner of Peter, who did forsweare Christ. Now if any should so stumble, that he should be compelled to goe backe, & be vtterly cast downe in minde, neuertheles we must not as yet cast him of, as though he did neuer any more pertaine to the kingdom of Christ: for we must leaue Christes propertie to him self, that his kingdom may remayne vnto him selfe meere grace and mercy, whose desire is to helpe them onely, which are grieued with their calamitie and miserie, and doe greatly desire to be deliuered from it. That his kingdom may altogither abound with comfort, and he him selfe be the comfortable and gentle shepeheard, which prouoketh and

They which fall so grieuously that they euen deny the Gospel, must not be vtterly despeired of.

allureth euery one to come vnto him. And all this is done by the Gospell, whereby the weake are to be strengthned, the sicke to be healed. For it is such a word as is fit for all distres of consciences, giuing aboundant comfort to all, that none dispeire although he be a great sinner. Christ therfore alone is ỹ good shepeheard, which healeth all sortes of diseases, and helpeth them that are fallen: which he that doth not, is not a shepeheard.

The Prophet thus goeth forward: That which was driuen away, ye haue not brought againe. What is that that is driuen away? The despised soule, which is so scorned and contemned, that it is thought to be done in vaine, whatsoeuer Christian doctrine is bestowed vpon it. Notwithstanding Christ doth not yet suffer, that it should be dealt roughly with. His kingdom is not compassed with so straight boundes, that onely the stronge, whole and perfect doe florish therein, for this pertaineth to the heauenly life to come, now in this his kingdom onely grace and sweetnes must abound. As God promised to ỹ children of Israell Exod. 3. that ỹ appointed land of Canaan should flow only w̄ milk & hony, euen as Paule 1. Cor. 12. affirmeth, that vpon those members of the body, which we thinke more vnhonest, we put more honestie on.

He concludeth: The lost haue ye not sought. That is lost which seemeth to be condemned, of the returne whereof there is scarce any hope. Of which sort in the Gospell were Publicanes & harlots, and at this day they, who haue not so much as a sparke of godlines, but are vntractable and vnruly. Neither are they notwithstanding to be left, but all meanes are to be assayed that at the last they may be reclaimed and brought againe into the right way. Which S. Paule eftsoones did, as when he deliuered two of this sort vnto Satan, 1. Tim. 1. I haue deliuered them vnto Satan that they might learne not to blaspheme. And 1. Cor. 5. I haue determined, sayth he, to deliuer them to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saued in the day of the Lorde Iesus. Them he cast of as condemned, and yet notwithstanding did not despeire of them. Christ therefore is so to be preached, that he reiecteth no mā although he be weake, but that he willingly receiueth, comforteth and strengthneth euery man, so that he alwayes appeareth to be the good shepeheard. Hereupon it commeth to passe, that men willingly resort vnto him, and that it is no neede any more to compell them. The Gospell

They which seeme euen past hope must not be quite cast of.

ſpell ſo allureth, and maketh them willing, that they come with a certaine loue and pleaſure, and with all boldnes. Whereupon a deſire and loue vnto Chriſt is increaſed in them, ſo that they doe any thing willingly, who before were to be vrged and compelled. If we be conſtrayned, we doe grudgingly & vnwillingly, which God plainly abhorreth. But when as I ſhall perceiue that God dealeth ſo louingly and gentlely with me, my hart is as it were rauiſhed, ſo that I can not ſtay my ſelfe, but I muſt euen runne vnto him, leauing all other things, wherupon afterward all pleaſure and ioy enſueth vnto me.

The Goſpel allureth vs with loue & pleaſure to come vnto Chriſt.

Now conſider how great an euill it is, when one iudgeth an other. The kingdom of Chriſt, as we haue heard, is ſo ordeined, that it healeth and iuſtifieth onely ſicke and miſerable conſciences, wherefore all they are farre deceiued, which haue regard only to the ſtronge and whole. It is great therefore and very effectuall knowledge whereby Chriſt is well knowne. It is grafted in vs by nature to be altogither euill and wicked, & yet notwithſtanding we would haue euery one to be honeſt, we earneſtly regard ſtronge Chriſtians, not looking therewithall to the ſicke and weake, thinking them not to be Chriſtians, if they are not ſtronge, and iudge others euill, if they be not altogither holy, when as we our ſelues in the meane ſeaſon exceede the reſt in naughtines. Now the cauſe hereof is our moſt corrupt nature, & our blind reaſon, which will meaſure the kingdom of God according to her owne opinion, whereby it thinketh that thoſe things are vncleane before God, which ſeeme vncleane vnto it ſelf, wherfore that opinion muſt be remoued out of our minde. For if thou haſt very much regard thereunto, thou ſhalt at the laſt come into the mind to thinke: alas, what ſhal become of me, if all Chriſtians muſt be ſuch, namely, ſtronge, whole, and godly? When ſhal I once attayne ſo farre? And ſo thou ſhalt bringe thy ſelfe into ſuch a perplexitie, that thou ſhalt hardely euer attayne vnto true comfort and ioye. Thou therefore muſt be ſo affected, that thou ſay: Moſt gracious Ieſu, although I finde my ſelfe altogether weake, diſeaſed, and in a wretched ſtate, yet I will not therefore caſt of all hope, but wil flie vnto thee, that thou mayſt ſuccour me. For thou onely art the ſhepeheard, & the good ſhepeheard, ſuch a one I am perſwaded that thou art, wherfore I will not deſpeire or be diſcouraged, although I come vnto thee being voyde of

Our corrupt nature and blind reaſon cauſe vs to erre & iudge amiſſe.

wozkes. We muſt therefoze beſtow our diligence that we may wiſely & well know Chriſt, that in his kingdom onely the weake and diſeaſed are conuerſant, and that it is nothing elſe, but as it were an hoſpitall, wherein onely the ſicke and feeble doe lie, of whom a care muſt be had. But few men haue this knowledge, foz this wiſedom is exceeding hard to be attayned vnto, ſo that it is wanting euen vnto them ſometime, who haue the Goſpel and the ſpirite, neither can any wiſedome come vnto men which is greater then it. Wherfoze, albeit men looke into the Scripture, which ſetteth foꝛth the kingdome of Chriſt, affirming it to be moſt pꝛecious, neuertheles they haue not ſuch a care what the wozdes ſignifie, neither doe they marke that true wiſedom is hidden therein, which excelleth our wiſedom by many degrees. Foz it is not Chriſtian wiſedom to haue to doe with men which are accounted wiſe, and ſkilfull, and to make mention, and talke of them, but to be occupied among the vnwiſe and them that lack vnderſtanding, not that delight & pleaſure ſhould be taken thereof, but that they may come from ſinne and fooliſhnes to righteouſnes and ſound vnderſtanding. Hereof it appeareth that Chriſtian wiſedom doth conſiſt in this, not that we looke aloft, & conſider thoſe thinges which are high and wiſe, and behold and ſee our ſelues in thē as it were in a glaſſe, but that we looke to thoſe things that are belowe, & marke that which is humble & fooliſh. He which knoweth this, let him giue thankes vnto God. Foz by this knowledge he becommeth ſuch a one as is able to pꝛepare and apply him ſelfe to euery thing which is in the woꝛld. But ye ſhall finde many, yea euen among them that pꝛeach the Goſpell, which are not yet come thus farre. Hitherto we haue bene ſo inſtructed & accuſtomed, that none muſt come vnto Chriſt, befoze he be altogether cleane, thou muſt therefoze foꝛſake that opinion, that thou maiſt attaine to true vnderſtanding, that thou maiſt knowe Chriſt aright, howe he is the true and good ſhepeheard, whereof we haue heard ſufficient.

Chriſtian wiſedom is occupied among the vnwiſe.

Nowe he compareth the good ſhepeheard with the euill, oꝛ hireling, and ſayth: A good shepeheard giueth his life for the sheepe: but an hireling, & he which is not the shepeheard, neither the sheepe are his owne, ſeeth the wolfe comming, & leaueth the sheepe, & the wolfe catcheth & ſcattereth the sheepe. So the hireling fleeth becauſe he is an hireling, & careth not for

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the sheepe. It is true in deede that Christ is properly the onely shepeheard, euen as ỳ name of Christ doth belong to him alone. yet he communicateth the same vnto vs, that we also may be called Christians. So although he be the onely shepeheard, yet he imparteth the same name to them that be of the ministerie. After the same maner Matth. 23. he forbiddeth, that we call no man father vpon the earth, forasmuch as there is one onely our father, which is in heauen, notwithstanding Paule calleth him selfe the father of the Corinthians 1. Cor. 4. when he sayth: In Christ Iesus I haue begotten you through the Gospell. So therefore it seemeth as though God alone would haue the name of a father, and in the meane season notwithstanding he graunteth the same name to men, that they also may be fathers, howbeit that they haue not of them selues but by Christ. Euen as we are called Christians, because we haue nothing of our selues, but for that all thinges are giuen vnto vs through Christ.

Moreouer, the hireling, sayth Christ, which is not the shepeheard, neither the sheepe are his owne, when he seeth the wolfe comming, leaueth the sheepe & fleth, &c. This surely is a hard saying, that they which truely preach the Gospel, and strengthen & heale the sheepe, neuertheles at the last doe suffer the sheepe to be caught and torne in peeces, and doe then flie away, when the sheepe haue neede of greatest helpe. As long as the wolues doe not appeare, they do their dutie carefully & diligẽtly, but as soone as they see the wolfe breake in, they forthwith leaue the sheepe. If they then haue fed them well, that they be fat, strong, & whole, they are the better liked of the wolues, for whome they haue fed them. But what is the hiddẽ meaning of this parable? The meaning of Christ is this: In my kingdome (which consisteth in nothing else, but that the weake be strengthned, the sicke healed, the faynt harted encouraged) the holy crosse shall not be wanting. For when it is preached, that Christ only, whose silly sheepe we are, hath care of vs, strengtheneth, healeth, and helpeth vs, & that our owne strength and our owne workes are of no importance at all, (whereby all workes of the world, and the diuerse sortes of worshipping God which it inuenteth are vtterly disallowed) the world cã not abide such maner of preaching, so that it is a natural propertie of ỳ Gospel, to bring ỳ crosse ẅ it as vnseparably accõpanying it, & he that will vnfeinedly prokes it before the world,

The hireling when the wolfe commeth leaueth the sheepe.

The crosse accompanieth the preaching of the Gospell.

must needes yeld him selfe to beare persecution. Forasmuch as the case standeth thus, it is not hard to perceiue how great difference there is betwene the true shepeheards and the hirelinges.

The hireling how he behaueth him selfe.

He that is an hireling preacheth the Gospell as long as he is reported among men to be a learned, godly & holy man. But when as he is reproued or set vpon as an heretike and wicked fellow, or moued to make a recantation, then he either recanteth, or taketh him selfe to his feete, leauing the miserable sheepe alone without a shepeheard, then their case becommeth worse then it was before. What doth it then auaile the sheepe if they were wel fed before? If they were true shepeheardes, they would spend their life before they woulde so leaue the sheepe to the iawes of the wolues, and would be ready alwayes to offer their necke to the axe for the Gospells sake. They therefore are neuer good shepeheards, which so preach the Gospell, that they may thereby get vnto them selues honour, riches, and profit, without all dout they are hirelings, who seeke after their owne thinges euen in sound doctrine, yea and in the word of God. Wherefore they abide no longer, then while they may haue honour, praise & commoditie thereby, but as soone as the wolfe commeth, goe backe, denye the worde, and get them selues away, leauing the sheepe, which very earnestly seeke for pasture and their shepeheard, who may keepe them from the iniurie of the wolues, but that good shepeheard can no where be found, who flieth away euen at that time, when the sheepe haue most neede of a defender and strengthner.

What the true shepeheard doth,

The same shall happen to vs in time to come, when we shall once begin to be touched in deede. Then the Preachers will shut their mouthes, and prouide for their safetie by flying, and the sheepe shall be miserably dispersed, so that one shall be caried this way, an other that way. God graunt that some of them may stand valiantly in defense of the Gospell, and spende their blood, if the case so require in deliuering their sheepe. Thus Christ hath painted forth ỳ hirelings in their colours, who thus sayth moreouer: I am that good shepeheard, and knowe mine, and am knowne of mine. These wordes doe containe much, I shoulde spend ouer much time, if I should handle them seuerally. He speaketh here of the peculiar dutie that belongeth to him selfe. I know my sheepe, sayth he, and they againe know me. Nowe the

summe

ſumme is this: Chriſt knoweth vs to be his cheepe, & we againe know him to be our chepeheard. He knoweth vs to be ſuch cheepe as are weake and diſeaſed, which he doth not caſt of, but hath a care of them, and healeth them, although they be ſo diſeaſed, that all the worlde thinketh that they are not his cheepe, and this in deede is the knowledge of ỹ world. But Chriſt doth not ſo know them, neither doth he greatly regard what maner of ones they be, but conſidereth whether they be cheepe. They therefore are the true chepeheards, who following Chriſt, doe ſo know their cheepe, that they looke vnto the perſons, not to the diſeaſe.

My father knoweth me, ſayth Chriſt, but the world knoweth me not. When as therefore the howre ſhall come, that I ſhal die an ignominious death vpon the croſſe, all with one voice will cry out: was this the ſonne of God? he muſt needes be a condemned man, and giuen vp vnto Satan, both in ſoule and alſo in body. So the world will conſider and know me. But my father will ſay in this ſort: this is my welbeloued ſonne, my king and Sauiour. He beholdeth not my affliction, my woundes, my croſſe & death, but he conſidereth my perſon, that is, me very ſelfe. Wherefore if I were in the middeſt of hell, or in the iawes of Satan, yet I ſhould come out againe, for the father will not forſake me. Likewiſe I know my cheepe, and they knowe me. They are certaine that I am a good chepeheard, they know me, therefore they come to me for ſuccour, and cleaue vnto me, neither doth it any thinge feare them, that they are ſubiect to manifold infirmities and diſeaſes, they knowe very well that I would haue ſuch maner of cheepe to reſort vnto me. Other sheepe I haue alſo, which are not of this folde: them alſo muſt I bringe and they shall heare my voice, and there shall be one shepefold, & one shepeheard. Some haue ſo handled this place, that they affirme it ſhall be fulfilled before the latter day, when Antichriſt, Iohn, and Helias ſhall come. Which is flatly againſt the truth, and forged of Satan, that men might beleue, that the whole world ſhall at the laſt become Chriſtian. Which Satan therefore did that he might darken the ſound doctrine, that we might neuer rightly vnderſtand it. Beware therefore of this deluſion. For by and by after the aſcenſion of Chriſt this was done and fulfilled, and is yet at this day fulfilled. As ſoone as the Goſpell was publiſhed, it was preached to the Iewes, and this people was the chepefold. Now

The world knoweth not Chriſt.

he sayth, that he hath certaine other sheepe also, which are not of this fold, which also he must gather together, whereby he sheweth, that the Gospell must be preached to the Gentiles that they also may beleue in Christ, that of the Iewes and Gentiles may be made one Church. Which he performed afterward by the Apostles, who preached the Gospell to the Gentiles, and brought them to the faith. So there is now one body, one Church, one faith, one hope, one loue, one baptisme, and so of the like, which continueth at this day, and shal so continue euen to the ende of the world. Wherfore doe not so vnderstand it as though all men shall beleue in Christ, for the crosse must alwayes be borne of vs, forasmuch as the greatest parte is alwayes of that faction, which persecuteth Christians. The Gospell also must be continually preached, that alwayes some may be brought to Christianitie. And thus much for a compendious exposition of this text.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER OF THE LOST SHEPE.

Luke 15.

Verse 1. THen resorted vnto him all the Publicans and sinners to heare him.

2. Therefore the Pharises and Scribes murmured, saying: He receiueth sinners and eateth with them.

3. Then spake he this parable to them saying:

4. What man of you hauing an hundred sheepe, if he lose one of thē, doth not leaue

leaue ninety and nine in the wildernes, and go after that which is lost, vntill he find it?

5. And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders with ioy.

6. And when he commeth home, he calleth togither his friendes and neighbours, saying vnto them: Reioyce with me: for I haue found my sheepe which was lost.

7. I say vnto you, that likewise ioy shall be in heauen for one sinner that repenteth, more then for ninetie & nine iust men, which neede none amendement of life.

IN this text, dearely beloued, euen that doctrine is contayned, which we are perswaded, and glory to be our chiefe doctrine, and which by best right deserueth to be called christian doctrine, to wit of grace and forgiuenes of sinnes, set downe against the doctrine of the law, and of workes. But it is a very shamefull thinge, that a sermon so excellent, and replenished with so great comfort and ioy, should be heard of a man that is wicked & a contemner of the word of God. This is much more miserable, that all thinke they haue so soone throughly learned it, to the knowledge whereof euery one will seeme to haue attained, thinking that there is nothing in it, which he doth not perfectly vnderstād, and that there is no neede to spend any more studie in learning it. Although it be not grieuous to God him selfe, neither doth it yrke or wearie him, euery peare repeating it, or rather euery day exercising it, as though he knewe to preach nothing else, being vnskilfull and ignorant of all other kind of doctrine. And we miserable and wretched men doe so soone as we thinke attaine to the knowledge of the chiefest doctrine, that forthwith it is wearisom and tedious vnto vs to repeat it, whereby all pleasure and loue of the worde of God dieth and is extinguished in vs.

What kinde of doctrine this text cōtaineth.

But before I declare the article or chiefe point here taught, I thinke it good, that the beginning of this chapter be diligently considered, which S. Luke setteth in steede of a preface, & shew-

eth what gaue Christ cause to make this sermon, where he sayth: Then resorted vnto him all the Publicans and sinners to heare him. In which wordes he plainly signifieth with what mē Christ kept companie, namely with them, which in the sight of all men liued as it did not become them, and were openly called sinners and euell persons. Whereby it appeareth that the Pharisees semed to haue sufficient cause to finde fault with Christ, for that he, which would be counted holy, did familiarly keepe companie with such men. For they were commonly called Publicans at that time, to whom the Romās did let out some citie or custome, or some charge or ouersight in matters, for a certain summe of money: as the Turke or Venetians do now commit to some one some citie or office, for which a certain summe of money is yearly to be payed, and what soeuer they shall scrape together by vniust exactions aboue this summe, that is their owne. So also the aforesaid Publicans did, which so gathered those tributes and money wherewith they were charged, that they themselues also might haue some gaine thereby. And seing that a summe of money to be paide for some citie or office was not small, they desirous to gaine thereby, did by all meanes deale vniustly, and vsed extortion in all thinges, in all places, and with all persons. For the Lordes and maisters held them so hardly and straightly, that they could not get much thereby, if they would deale rightly and iustly, and oppresse no man with vniust exactions. Whereupon they had a verie euell report abroad, that they were most vniust exactors, and endued with small honestie and integritie of life. Likewise the rest in generall were called sinners, which otherwise liued dishonestly and wretchedly, & were defiled with filthie offences, as with couetousnes, with whoredome, with surfetting and drunkennes, and such like. Such resort here vnto Christ, and come to heare him, when as before they had knowen him by report to be excellent and famous both in wordes and deedes.

With what kind of men Christ was conuersant.

Publicans what they were.

Howbeit it is certaine that in them although they semed euen desperate, there was a sparke of vertue and honestie, in asmuch as they longed after Christ, both coueting to heare his doctrine, and also earnestly desiring to see the workes which he did, when before they knewe him to be a good man, and heard no ill report either of his doctrine or workes, so that their life did farre differ from his. Neuertheles they are so wel disposed, that they are not

his

his enemies, neither refuse or flie his company, but runne vnto him, not of any euell purpose or intent, but to see and heare some good thing, whereby they may amend their life. Contrariwise the Pharises and Scribes, which were counted most righteous and holy, are such poysonfull beastes, that they are not only soze displeased at Christ, whom they cã abide neither to see noz heare, but also they can not be content, that miserable sinners should come vnto him, and heare him, whereby they being led by repentance might amend: Yea they do also beside this, murmur, and repzoue Christ, foz that he admitted vnto him, and receiued Publicãs and sinners, saying: Behold, is this that holy and famous man? Who will now say that he is of God, when as he hath society with so wicked wzetches? yea rather he is a dzinker of wine and a glutton, as they say elsewhere, a freind to Publicans and sinners. The malitious dealing of ỹ Scribes & Pharisees. Luke 7. 34.

Such a repozt he is cõstrained to beare of the holy Pharises, not foz that he giuing himselfe to gluttonie and surfetting, accustomed to feede excessiuely and followe riotous pleasure togither with them, but onely because he admitted such into his company, and did not contemptuously reiect them. Foz in their opinion he should haue gone with a sad and austere countenance, in base apparell, & haue remained seuered from the conuersation and companie of men, and refused their felowshippe, lest that by familiar custome with them, he should be defiled, and should haue done as they were accustomed to do after ỹ maner of holy men. Of whom Esaie wziteth, that they studied foz such puritie, that they did feare and suffer against their will euen the touching of a sinner. Which in deede plainly appeareth Luke 7. in the Pharise murmuring against Christ, because he suffred himselfe to be touched of the sinfull woman. And it was they, that would alway be his maisters, & prescribe vnto him rules whereby to liue, and behaue himselfe in this life. Therefoze in this place they murmur, foz that he did not applie himselfe vnto thẽ, neither did disdaine ỹ cõpany & conuersation of such sinners according to their example.

Now Christ also is somewhat stout, plainly shewing here, that he can suffer ỹ maistership of none, but that he is altogither free & exempt from the commaundements of all, as commonly in the Gospels we see him to be at his owne will & pleasure, who neuertheles otherwise was both gẽtler and also moze seruiceable then The stoutne of Christ.

all the reſt. But when as they would deale with him by lawes, & be his maiſters, thē all friendſhip ceaſſed, for he did not otherwiſe leape back, then the adamant layd vpon ỳ anuyle & ſtriken, ſpeaking and doing onely the contrary of that which they require of him, although they ſeeme to ſpeake euen rightly and well, alleaging thereunto alſo the worde of God. As they doe here, where they come and ſay: thou muſt doe thus, thou muſt follow the conuerſation of honeſt men, thou muſt flee the companye of wicked men. This truly is a ſubſtantial doctrine, and confirmed by teſtimony of the Scripture. For Moſes him ſelfe commaundeth the Iewes, to auoid euill men, & take away euil from amonge them. By this text they confirme their ſayings, & come with their Moſes, and would make Chriſt ſubiect to their lawes, and haue him ruled by them.

Chriſt compared to the Vnicorne.

But Chriſt neuertheles will be at his owne libertie. And he is not vnlike the Unicorne, which beaſt men deny that he can be taken aliue, with what kind of hunting ſoeuer he be aſſayled. He ſuffereth him ſelfe to be wounded, to be ſtriken with darts, and to be ſlayne, to be taken he doth not ſuffer him ſelfe. No otherwiſe doth Chriſt alſo, who although he be ſet vpon by lawes, yet doth he not ſuffer them, but breaketh through as through a ſpiders web, rebuking them moſt ſharpely. As Matth. 12. where they found fault with his Diſciples, becauſe they had plucked ỳ eares of corne on the Sabbath day, alleaging the commaundement of God that the Sabbath was to be kept holy, &c. he auoucheth the cleane contrary, tearing in ſunder ỳ commaundement, affirming the contrary both in wordes, and alſo by examples. Alſo Matth. 16, where he declareth to his Apoſtles that he ſhall ſuffer and be crucified, but Peter admoniſheth him to be of a good chere, and ſetteth before him the precept of charitie, ſaying: Maiſter, pitie thy ſelfe, there againe he doth earneſtly and ſharpely blame and rebuke his admoniſher, and ſayth: Get thee behinde me, Satan: thou vnderſtandeſt not the thinges that are of God, but the thinges that are of men.

Chriſt is impatient of lawes.

And in a ſumme, he is moſt impatient of all lawes wherewith they deale with him, he will be moſt free from all commaundements, and acknowledged to be the Lord of them. He alway giueth ſuch aunſwers, as with which he repreſſeth the exactors, neither will he keepe any law as though he were compelled to do it.

it. Contrariwise, when he doth any thinge of his owne accorde, then no law is so litle or so light, whereunto he doth not willingly obey, and doth much more then it requireth. Wherefore there can none be founde more gentle and seruiceable then he, if he be urged with the controlement or exaction of none. Moreouer he doth so farre humble him selfe, that he washeth the feete of Judas which betrayed him, according as he him selfe speaketh of him selfe: I came not to be serued, but to serue others, &c. which is manifest to them that consider his life, howe he walked abroade in Judea, Samaria, Galile, and in the night slept on the ground, fasted forty dayes, and tooke no rest at all, but patiently sustained so much labour, that they feared lest he should be rauished in minde, or finally bringe some hurt to his body. He doth all thinges that he can, but that he refuseth to be compelled, and suffereth no lawes to be prescribed vnto him, which if any set before him, he most stoutely resisteth and striueth against them. So he is both of a most stoute and of a most milde spirit, neyther is there any more stoute, nor more seruiceable then he, whoe can abide to doe none of those thinges that are exacted of him, and neuertheles doth all thinges euen most aboundantly, and as it were ouerfloweth with a floud of good workes, and watereth all thinges, no man commaunding him, or by way of controlement exacting and requiring any thinge of him, but he beinge permitted to doe voluntarily and of his owne accord.

Christ humble and seruiceable. *Matth.* 20. 28

Christ both of a most stout and also of a most mild spirit.

These thinges are done for our example, that we may learne what a true Christian man is after the spirit, lest we iudge him according to the lawe, and according to our owne wisedom and vnderstanding. For Christ is therefore our Lorde, that he may make such men of vs, as he is him selfe. And as he can not suffer him selfe to be tied and bound with lawes, but will be Lorde of lawes, yea and of all thinges, so also ought not the conscience of a Christiã to suffer them. For we are so much made free by Christ, that our conscience may know nothing cõcerning any law, whose iudgement & controlement it may abide to suffer. Neither ought we any otherwise to be affected according to the state of ỹ inward conscience, then if no lawe had bene giuen or made: yea as if neither x. cõmaundements, nor one, either of God, or of Bishop, or of Cesar were giuẽ to vs, that we may plainly say: I know nothing

The conscience of a Christian must not be bound with lawes.

of any law, neyther wil I know any thing. For in that state and condition, wherein we Christians are, our workes, & the workes of all men doe cease, yea and all lawes also. For where there is no worke, neither can there be any law, requiring a worke and saying: this thing was to be done of thee, this to be left vndone. But we through Christ are wholly free from all workes, and righteous by meere grace and mercy, whereby we liue onely before God. And this is our treasure, whereby we are Christians, and liue and stand before God. For how we ought to liue in outward conuersation, to wit in flesh and blood before the world, it doth nothing pertaine vnto this place.

A Christian must not suffer his cõscience to be held captiue of any lawe.

Wherefore a Christian must learne so to rule his conscience, that he suffer it not to be held captiue or entangled with any law. But whosoeuer will bind and hold it with any law, let him stoutly and boldely striue thereagainst, and doe as he seeth Christ doe here and elsewhere, where he vseth so great stoutnes and earnestnes of minde, that no Moses or Exactor of the lawe can preuaile any thinge with him, although otherwise he be most humble, most sweete and gentle of all men. Howbeit this art is aboue measure high and excellent, which none but he vnderstandeth, whereof he is the Maister, who knoweth howe to appease all lawes and teachers of lawes. We are not able to doe so: For the Deuill mightely assaileth vs, and as often as he setteth vpon the conscience of man, he driueth him to that point, that he entreth disputation with him, what he hath done or not done. Then such a disputation beginneth, as wherein is debated of our sinne and righteousnes, euen then man is brought into a danngerous case and into the myre, where he sticketh, neither can he escape or rid him self out, but is forthwith deeper and deeper plunged in. For he is laden with a heauy burden, which he is not able to beare, wherefore he walketh musing, gnawing & consuming his minde, neither can he get any quietnes thereof. Which I doe plainely feele in my selfe, neither can I wrastle out, and deliuer my selfe by any trauell, although I labour alwayes, assaying all meanes to escape out of this goulfe, that I may aunswere the lawe, and obtaine so much, that it may keepe silence, and say, now at length thou hast done so much, wherewith I am constrayned to be content. But all endeuour and study is in vayne: for such a deepe pit and daungerous goulfe it is, out of which no man is able to escape

We of our selues are not able to pacifie and appease the lawe.

cape, although he ioyne the helpes of all men to him self, as they can beare me witnes which haue made triall hereof, and doe as yet daily trie it.

The cause is our nature, which will haue to doe with workes and lawes, and heare what they say, and followe them that say: Why doth he eate with Publicanes and sinners? if he did eate and drinke with vs, he should do wel. Also: why do thy Disciples plucke the eares of corne on the Sabbath day? &c. with whom it will haue to do so long, til the law sayth: now thou art righteous. For it can attaine to no higher vnderstanding, then that the doctrine of the law is the chiefest doctrine, and that the righteousnes thereof is the best life before God. In it it continually remaineth so captiue yea and bound, neither can it by any meanes deliuer it self out of this prison, being not able to pacifie and appease the law, that it doe not exact any thinge of it, or reprehend it in any thing, but it is compelled to be captiue therein as in a perpetuall prison, and the longer it striueth and fighteth with the lawe, into so much worse case doth it alwayes come, vntill at the last it be wholy subdued.

What therfore must I do, the law assailing & vrging my conscience, especially when I perceiue my self not to do that which it requireth? I aunswere, euen that which Christ doth here, who admitteth or acknowledgeth no law, although brought out of the law of God. So learne thou also to doe, that thou mayest boldely say to the lawe, leaue of lawe to dispute with me, I haue nothing to doe with thee. And for that very same cause, for which thou commest to dispute with me, and to enquire of me, how good and righteous I am, I will not heare thee. For it here maketh no matter, what I am, or what I ought to doe, and what not to doe, but what Christ him self is, ought to doe, and doeth. For nowe we are in the bridechamber, where onely the bridegrome and the bride must haue to doe, and it behoueth not thee to come thither, nor to intermeddle any thing there. What a Christian must do when the law vrgeth his conscience.

But neuertheles it now and then knocketh and sayth: in the meane season notwithstanding good workes must be done of thee, the commaundements of God must be kept, if thou wilt obtaine saluation. Aunswere againe: but thou heerest that it is not nowe tyme to speake of them: for now I haue obtayned my righteousnes and the summe of all my saluation without my How we must aunswere the law whē it is instant vpon vs.

wozkes in Chzist my Lozde, and am already saued befoze thou camest, therefoze I haue no neede of thy pzesence. Foz as I haue sayd, where wozkes pzeuayle nothing, neyther is the law there of any impoztance oz weight, and where there is no law, neither is there any sinne. The bzide therefoze alone, all the rest beinge excluded, must reigne in the bzidechamber with Chzist, in whom shee hath all thinges at once, neyther needeth shee any thinge moze, which is necessary to saluation. Wherefoze the lawe must be excluded and vtterly reiected, yea and cast of, as often as it will inuade and set vpon the conscience. Foz surely it ought not to medle therewith, neither commeth it in tyme, when it will haue muche to doe there, where it ought to haue nothing to doe, and whither it ought in no wise to come. Foz the conscience resteth in this article of our Chzistian faith, I beleue in Iesus Chzist my Lozd, which suffered, died, & was buried foz me, &c. vnto whom both Moses law, & Cesars, & diuine lawes ought to giue place. All that therfoze is boldly to be chased from me, whatsoeuer will dispute with me of sinnes, righteousnes, and such like thinges.

Beholde, Chzist would in this place resemble this libertie vnto vs, that as Chzistians we suffer no maister in our conscience, trusting most constantly to this one thinge, that we are baptised, and called vnto Chzist, and by him iustified and sanctified, whereupon we may say: He is my righteousnes, my treasure, my wozke, and in a summe, what not? against sinne and vnrighteousnes (whereof the lawe indeuoureth to accuse me) If it please you to haue other righteousnes, wozkes, lawe, &c. then may ye take them from whence ye will, surely ye shall finde no place foz them in me. Thus may a man defend him self, and stande against the suggestions and tentations of the Deuill, and of sinnes either past oz present. Wherefoze Moses and Chzist are farre to be separated asunder, as also wozkes and faith, the conscience and the outward life, so that if the lawe will sette vpon me, and make my hart afrayde, then is it tyme to sende it away, and if it will not giue place, to thzust it out by fozce, and to say: I will willingly doe good wozkes, and will goe fozward as much as I am able foz that time that I liue amonge men, but here I wil know nothing at al of them in my cõscience, & therefoze let me alone, & pzate nothing of them. Foz here I will

vouchsaue

vouchsafe to heare neither Moses nor the Pharisees, but Christ alone doth obtaine place to reigne here. I will like vnto Marie, sit at his feete to heare his worde, but let Martha tary abroade, and busie her selfe in the kitchin and about the household affayres. And in a summe, I will not trouble the quietnes of my conscience.

But what shall I say, whereas in the meane season I doe daily sinne, which surely is euill? I aunswere, in deede it is true, I am a sinner, and I do vniustly, but I must not therefore despeire, as though I were subiect to condemnation, yea or tremble because of the rigour of the lawe. For by faith I apprehend him, which hath apprehended me, and apply my selfe vnto him, which hath embraced me in baptisme, and hath put me in his bosom, and by the preaching of the Gospell hath called me to the communion of all his good thinges, bidding me to beleeue in him. Nowe when as I haue apprehended him by faith, then may I be bold to bid the Pharisees, and Moses with his tables, all Lawyers with their bookes, all men with their workes holde their peace and giue place. No law hath then any power to conuince or accuse me: for in this Christ I haue all thinges aboundantly, whatsoeuer can be required in me.

An obiection

The aunswer

This, I say, is the doctrine and arte of Christians, the scope and ende whereof is this, euen to reigne with Christ. But blockish men doe not vnderstand it, taking hereupon occasion to liue more freely, as they list, saying: what neede is there that I should do good workes, forasmuch as Christ hath abrogated the law, &c. There foolish babbling is in no wise to be borne, for Christ is on the other part also to be considered of thee, and thou must marke what he doth more. For here he him selfe sayth: that he is that man which seeketh the miserable and lost sheepe, which also he witnesseth by his present deede, by receiuing sinners and Publicanes, and by preaching vnto them. Whereby thou seest that he doth fulfill much more then the law commaundeth to be done, and teacheth thee to doe the same by his example. He is of such an heroicall stomacke, that he will not be vnder the lawe, yet doth he of his owne accorde moe thinges then the law requireth. Doe thou so also, neither looke when thou shalt be forced and driuen on by the lawe, but without the lawe and of thine owne accorde doe that which is needefull to be done, as Peter 1. Pet. 2

Albeit we be free from the law, we must neuertheles doe good workes after the example of Christ.

admoniſheth ſaying: as free, and not as hauing the libertie for a cloke of malitiouſnes, but as the ſeruaunts of God. And Paule Rom. 6: Being made free from ſinne, ye are made the ſeruaunts of righteouſnes. Theſe are they, which do all thinges with a free conſcience without the lawe, and vnconſtrained.

For where the Goſpell is truely in the hart, it maketh a man to be ſuch a one, as doth not looke while the law commeth, but is ſo full of ioy in Chriſt, that he is with ſpeede caried vnto good workes, doing well to all men, as much as he is able, & that of his owne accorde, before the law commeth into his minde. Moreouer he beſtoweth both body and life, hauing no regard, what he muſt therefore ſuffer, and ſo he is full of good workes which voluntarily flowing as it were out of a continuall fountaine are deriued vnto many: As Chriſt being compelled, doth not abide to take vp ſo much as a ſtrawe, but vncompelled giueth him ſelfe to be crucified for me, and for the whole worlde, dying for the loſt ſheepe.

Howbeit it is very neceſſary to diſcerne theſe thinges well, when it is come to hand ſtrokes and within the throwing of the dart, as it is ſaid, the law and ſinnes diſputing now with thy conſcience, then ſee that thou doe boldly repreſſe Moſes, and bid him keepe ſilence, ſending him abroade to the olde man. Driue him into Moſes ſchole, that he may diſpute with him and ſay: Dooſt thou heare? thou art too ſlowe and ſluggiſh in giuing and ſeruing thy neighbour. When Chriſt is to be ſerued of thee, thou wilt more willingly ſerue thy belly: thou wilt come in no perill for Chriſtes ſake, thou dooſt deceitfully robbe thy neighbour circũuenting him by what meanes ſoeuer thou canſt. For that ſluggiſh aſſe flying labour and following onely idlenes and wantonnes, vſe the tables of ſtone, whom euen againſt his will, conſtrayne to goe on in his duety.

The old mã muſt be driuen into Moſes ſchole.

Wherefore when thou ſhalt ſet vpon me, in that thinge which is right and meete (thou muſt ſay vnto Moſes) I will willingly heare thee, and follow thy admonitions, namely according to the outward man, and in outward life, where thou maiſt beare rule like a ſcholemaiſter, & as one gouerning a familie: Where thou haſt power to cõmaund me, to be obedient, modeſt, patient, good to my neighbour, dutifull and liberal toward the poore, & to celebrate God with praiſes poured forth to his glorie: moreouer to

We muſt admit Moſes to deale with the outward man, but not with the cõſcience.

be

be content for his words sake to abide the contumelies & sclaunders of all persons, & to suffer euery kind of iniurie of the world. With all which I am not greatly moued, yea I would doe more thinges then I am able to do according to the outward man. For the spirit, by the testimonye of Christ, is willing, and ready, although the flesh be weake.

But if thou wilt go so farre, whither it is vnlawfull for thee to come, that is, into my hart and conscience, there will I neither see thee, nor vouchsafe to heare thee. For there I haue an other both great & vnspeakeable treasure, whose name is Christ. And in a summe, whatsoeuer pertaineth to bridle ỳ outward man, thou canst not lay on a sufficient burden thereof: but thou must burden the conscience nothing at all. For he that enioyeth Christ, is aboue all lawes, as Paul saith: the lawe is not giuen for the iust, who notwithstanding in the meane time doth more thinges, then he is able to fulfill in the flesh. For according to the lawe we are sinners, and concerning our person we must abide vnder it. But through Christ we are farre aboue the lawe.

So Moses without Christ must exercise his grosse workes, whereby he may compel men which are not yet Christians, to be honest ciuely before the world: for he doth not make Christians righteous & honest. Howbeit I will not deny ỳ he doth this, that he sheweth vnto them their duties, which otherwise they would willingly fulfil & satisfie, yea & doe moe things also, but that the flesh doth not so willingly & ẅ that readines wherwith it ought, follow the spirit. In which respect they are to be admonished and urged, the conscience neuertheles remaining free, so that the law haue no power to accuse them. Wherfore such doctrine & admonition ought to be among Christians (as it is certaine ỳ among the Apostles there was) whereby euery man may be admonished of his state & office. As for the rest which are not Christians, they must be ruled by Moses lawes, & burdened with them both outwardly & inwardly, wherby they may be forced and afflicted, that they may do that which is right, forsaking that which is euill, although they do it not with a patient and willing mind. Of which kind ỳ rash multitude of ỳ vnruly commõ sort & ỳ obstinat people is, who do not regard or vnderstand ỳ liberty of Christ, although they can babble & glory of many things concerning the Gospell, & they notwithstanding do abuse it only to ỳ lust of their mind: let

Who they be which must be vnder the discipline of Moses.

them know that they are vnder the discipline and correction of Moses.

For they are not such men, as are capable of this doctrine, which liue with such a secure mind, that they thinke, they haue no neede of the Gospel, or that they otherwise do sufficiently knowe it. But they onely are capable hereof, which are busied with the disputation of the conscience & the law, of sinnes & of the wrath of God, by consideration whereof they become astonied, feeling the wordes of the hart speaking thus: Alas, how wretchedly haue I led my life? what account shal I make vnto God? & so they be too much fearful & amased, the rest being more then is meete secure and presumptuous, feeling no lawe nor sinne, no nor any trouble at all. And the case standeth very vnequally with both, for they which should haue nothing to do with the law, do most of all wrastle wt, & alone feele it. But others of whom onely ỹ law should be felt, are nothing moued with it: yea the more grieuously they are terrified by the lawe & the wrath of God, by so much they become more indurate. There must therfore be an other maister to amend these, namely, the slaper & tormentor, who may teach thē, being vnwilling to do wel in the name of the Lord & with fauour, in the name of an other to do that that becommeth them, with no fauour, the reward also of hell fire and of all miseries being set before them.

Howbeit Christ both here and euery where else (as it is said) both by doctrine & also by his owne example teacheth vs, which feele our sinnes and the burden of the lawe, and would willingly be Christians, to accustome our selues to fight against it, & driue it from vs vnto others, to giue no place to the Deuil, who would by the lawe breake vppe the bridechamber of Christ, and thrust him selfe into his place, that is, take away from the conscience her ioy and comfort, whereby he may drawe man into desperation, that he may not be able cheerefully to lift vppe his hart and heade before God. For this is the arte of Christians whom it behoueth to knowe and learne moe thinges, then that prophane and blockishe common sorte knoweth and vnderstandeth, that we may knowe well the maner how to fight with the deuill, and to beare his assault, as often as he shall set vpon vs, & dispute with vs out of Moses. With whome when he goeth about such things, we must not dispute in many wordes, but must forthwith appeale

Christians must knowe how to fight against the deuill and to beare his assaults.

appeale from Moses to Christ, and cleaue to him. For all his trauaills & deceits tend vnto this end, that he may craftely plucke vs from Christ, and draw vs vnto Moses. For he knoweth full well, the matter being brought to that point, the victorie shalbe on his side.

Wherefore thou must againe and againe take heede that thou suffer not thy selfe to be plucked out of this hauen, neither to be entised out of this circle. And although he shall lay many things against thee out of the lawe, euen inasmuch as it is the word of God, whereunto it is meete that thou do obey, yet maist thou aunswere him and say: doest thou not heare, that I will now know or heare nothing concerning the lawe? for we are now in that circle and hauen, wherein it is not enquired what I must do, or leaue vndone, but by what means we obtaine to haue God gentle and fauourable vnto vs, and how we get remission of sinnes. Here I will abide in the armes of Christ, cleauing vnseparably about his necke, and creeping into his bosome, whatsoeuer the lawe shall say, and my heart shall feele: neuertheles, so that we keepe the principall part of our faith syncere, and the chiefe point safe, outwardly I will willingly do and suffer, what burden soeuer it shall lay vpon me. Beholde, he that vnderstood this art well, should be a right and perfect man, as Christ was, so farre aboue all lawes, that he might be bold to call Peter Satan, and the Pharisees fooles, and leaders of the blynde, and put Moses himselfe to silence, and so liue altogether without the lawe, and yet in the meane season fulfill all lawes: furthermore be obstinate and stout against all that will enforce and constraine him, and yet notwithstanding of his owne accord profite and obey all. But truly herein consisteth all the defect, that we do neuer fully and perfectly learne this arte, the deuell so letting and hindering vs, that we go preposterously to worke, being too ready and willing to heare all things whatsoeuer the lawe sayth. At whose threatnings also we are not a litle astonied, which it had bin better for vs not to haue heard. Againe in outward things also we giue our selues to libertie more then is conuenient, whereas the body should be kept vnder & bridled with workes, whereby it might be compelled to beare what soeuer should be grieuous vnto it, when as yet it oftentimes sinneth, yet so, that sinne abide without, where it must abide, & haue his Moses, who

We must take most diligent heede that the deuell plucke vs not from Christ to Moses.

alwaies may be nere vnto it with his exactiõs. Howbeit inwardly let no sinne or law beare rule, or reigne, but let Christ alone rule and reigne by mere grace, ioy and comfort. So all thinges should be done rightly, and man should be apt and fit to all good thinges, both to do, and also to suffer, with a glad and obedient heart by faith not feyned in the grace of God through Christ. Wherefore let the conscience beare rule ouer all lawes, let the flesh be subiect to euerie law.

Now he that is skilfull of this arte, let him giue thankes to God, and take heede that he be not too wise in it, and that he conceiue not a false persuasion of knowledge. For I and my like do not yet vnderstand it, as we ought to vnderstand it, although we be most expert of all, and haue bin longest exercised therein. For (as I haue said) it is such an art, as no man knoweth, but they which are Christians, to ỹ learning wherof notwithstãding they are compelled to be scholers all there life longe. Wherefore most farre of from the knowing hereof are those secure spirits, who alone know all things, but who in very deed beside that false persuasiõ of knowledge, know nothing at all, and by this verie persuasion they are farthest of all drawne from this art and from the whole Gospell. Neither is there any thing more grieuous, no nor a greater hurt can be brought vnto Christianitie, then by these pettie doctours and maisters, which seeme vnto themselues to haue some wisedome. For they fill all corners of the world with sects and factions, being such men, as serue neither God nor men, heare neither the lawe nor the Gospell, but contemne the lawe with a secure mynde, and loath the Gospell with hearing it, alwayes seeking after new doctrine. But truly we teach nothing for their sakes, inasmuch as they are not worthie of our doctrine, and are so punished of God, that they can neuer learne it, & bring forth any frute thereby, although they heare it. Therefore let vs only keepe it, whereof they do take away nothing at all from vs, but that they heare a vaine noyse and sounde of it.

And thus much for the first part of this sermõ, in which Christ teacheth by his owne example, how euery man ought to keepe his conscience free from all disputation of the lawe, and terrour of the wrath of God and of sinnes. Nowe consequently I thinke it good diligently to consider this excellent and goodly parable
v. 3. of Christ, where he beginneth and sayth: What man of you ha-

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uing an hundreth sheepe, if he lose one of them, doeth not leaue ninetie and nine in the wildernes, and go after that which is lost vntill he find it? Christ is not onely of a stout mynde, who will not follow the wordes and maistership of them, but he bringeth probable causes also of his stoutnes, with great cunning refelling their obiections, and stopping their mouthes, so, that they can murmure nothing against him. Moreouer he conuinceth them by their owne example and deede, and concludeth, that they ought for good cause to be vtterly ashamed, being bold to speake vnto him, & reprehēd that in him in so great a matter, which they themselues do in a much lesse. For by what meanes could he better and more readily aunswere them, then if he should say: Will you, O excellent and most wise maisters, commaund this thing, and teache me to driue away and alienate from me miserable sinners, which long after me, and come to heare me, when as there is nothing that you your selues do not for one lost shepes sake, who leauing ninetie and nine in the wildernes (that is in the field and at the fold) do runne to seeke that which is lost, neither do ye leaue of seeking, vntill such time, as ye haue found it, and brought it home? And you count it to be well and commendably done, for which if any should finde fault with you, without dout ye would reproue him as mad and beside himselfe. And should not I as a Sauiour of soules do likewise with men, as you do with a lost shepe? seing there is no comparison euen of one soule to all the creatures liuing & breathing in the earth. Why therefore are you not vtterly ashamed of your doings, presuming to reprehend me in this worke, which you your selues commend, and are forced to commend? Wherefore if ye reproue and finde fault with me, you your selues are first to be reproued and found fault with. This is rightly to haue aunswered, and with honour to haue stopped the mouthes of these controllers & fault finders, the causes being sufficiently shewed, why they ought not here to finde fault with him or controlle him. They haue well surely yeelded vnto him with shame enough, as it is meete, and haue gained nothing els by their maistership and controllement then vtter shame and ignominie. For it is a shame to such maisters, yea and an exceeding great abomination, that they sticke not to arrogate so much vnto themselues, as to teache that man, and admonish him of his dutie, who of God is appointed a maister ouer

How Christ aunswered the Scribes and Pharisees when they murmured for that he receiued sinners vnto him.

all. But it ought so to fall out, as I haue said, that he which will rule and iudge a Christian by his maistership, and endeuoureth to bring him from his baptisme and the article of Christ, to be ruled by his wisedome or law, doth not onely become a foole, but is also the author of extreme abomination and homicide. For he worketh shame to the temple and sanctuarie of God, and with deuelish rashnes inuadeth his kingdom, where he alone with the holy Ghost must reigne. Wherefore he verie well deserueth, that God againe bring him to shame and ignominie before the whole world, seing that he taketh to himselfe maistership in that place, where only Christ ought to be maister, and not vnworthely to his great euell he kicketh against the pricke.

Wherefore it is not good to iest with Christians, for they are Saincts, and let him that is wise, not be too busie with that man, whose name is Christ, for he can get no gaine thereby, for Christ is most impatient of all their maistership and doctrine. So also a Christian must by no meanes suffer them, or if he suffer them, giuing place to such suggestions, to wit, thou oughtest to haue done this or that, or as yet thou oughtest to do it, then is his case become exceeding ill, inasmuch as he hath fallen from Christ. Therefore we must endeuour, to hold Christ fast, hauing no regard, although all the world shall teach vs. For if we shall abide with him, and hold the true vnderstanding of the article concerning him, we shall easily ouercome all such maisters and teachers. For this Christ wilbe most free from all controlement & maistership, contending to be the onely maister and controller of all men, that either in fauour they may reuerently acknowledge him for the Lord and maister, and themselues for fooles, or in furie and indignation being subiect to the reproch of all men, may vtterly perish.

We must in any wise cleaue fast vnto Christ.

But I haue said before, that the present doctrine for the verie exceeding goodnes, sweetnes and consolation thereof, is not to be set forth to the rude, blockish, and vnrulely common sort, to whom we do not preach it, but to those onely, which striue with terrour and anguish of conscience, or stand in perill and daunger of death, and dispute with the deuell cõcerning their sinnes committed, whereby he would driue them vnto desperation. Before these this amiable image is to be set, whereby they may receiue comfort and cheerefulnes of minde. As for others which liue

with

with a secure mind, and do litle know what anguish and spiritual sorowfulnes is, they are to be ledde to Moses to the tormentour. For it is an image most pleasaunt and amiable, and more artificially painted, then any Apelles is able to paint with his pensill. Neither doth any man excell in such eloquence of speeche, that he is able sufficiently to declare & comprehend it in wordes. Wherefore it is to be apprehended in the hearte by fayth, as much as may be. Neuertheles we must speake something of it, that we may giue cause and occasion to other to thinke and consider more earnestly thereof.

I also, sayth he, haue an hundred sheepe, that is, that litle flock of all Christiandom, of which number one is lost, and fallen from the communion of Christians. Now therefore doest thou desire to know the affection of my minde? then must thou bestow thy diligence, to paint out well and cunningly both the shepeheard and the lost sheepe. For that shepeheard, which is but a man, and guideth the flocke, which is created to be slaine, hath great regard to preserue it in safetie, and is not a litle carefull, how he may finde the sheepe when it is lost, and bring it home againe, and with no lesse desire the sheepe longeth after the shepehearde. Whom if it vnderstand to be his owne shepeheard (as by nature it doth vnderstand) it feareth him not, but runneth vnto him with great confidence, and being full of good hope, goeth before him, yea as soone as euer it heareth his voice, it aunswereth by bleating. On the otherside also the shepeheard hath greate care and desire to finde againe the lost shepe, which hath straied frō him. Both he himselfe seeketh, & sendeth forth seruaūts to seeke there, whithersoeuer he thinketh it is straied, neither doth he leaue seeking, vntill hauing found it, he hath brought it home. For he is not ignorant how miserable a liuing creature a solitary sheep is, whose life consisteth onely in the helpe and safe keeping of the shepeheard, inasmuch as it can nothinge at all helpe it selfe, but being destitute of a shepeheard, is constrayned to perish. Moreouer, it is also fearfull and ready to goe strap, and as soone as it hath wandered out of the way, and from the shepeheard, forthewith commeth into perill of life, & can not tary, although being brought, it commeth to an other flocke, and a straunge shepeheard calleth it, neuertheles it goeth on through thornie and sedgie places, through waters and fennes, vntill it come in daunger

How the sheep is affected towarde his shepeheard.

The affectiō of the shepeheard toward his sheepe.

of ỹ woulfe, or wasted by some other mischiefe vtterly perisheth. And although it be brought into bywayes and deserts, and is now thought to be lost, notwithstãding it hath this hope, as much as nature hath put into it, that if it might heare his shepeheard, it should forthwith exceedingly reioyce being deliuered from all euell. Moreouer neither doth the shepeheard therefore seeke it, that when he hath found it, he may wrathfully fight with it, or handle it ill for that it hath gone astray, or cast it to the woulfe to be torne in pieces, but all his care and thought is, that he may most gentlely allure it to himselfe, and may deale with it most louingly, to wit, lay it on his shoulders and carie it, vntill he hath brought it vnto the rest of the flocke.

This is that picture, resembled in this creature & silly beast, whereby Christ sheweth vnto vs, what affection of mynde he beareth, and what he doth toward vs, and also what we ought to promise our selues concerning him. For seeing this is manifestly true in nature, the same is much more true in the kingdom of Christ, which is the kingdom of grace, loue, and consolation. Therefore see that thou also do set before thy selfe the sheepe pertaining to this shepeheard, then shalt thou truly vnderstand, how much greater and vehementer care he hath taken to preserue it, also with how great study and diligence, yea and from the heart he is carefull for it, that he may finde it and bring it home againe. For he will haue his maruelous and continuall kindenes, and the vnspeakeable flames of his most feruent loue to be shewed, or rather poured forth vpon miserable, fearefull and trembling consciences, which vnfeynedly lament their sinnes, and desire to be deliuered from them, and such are his true sheepe.

The parable of the shepeheard & the lost sheepe resembleth Christ, & the Christiã that is strayed out of the way.

For with a man that hath lost this shepeheard, and heareth him not, the case standeth as with the lost sheepe, which being estraunged from his shepeheard, strayeth more and more from him. And although it be called by the voices of others, and runneth vnto them, thinking that it shal fynde his owne shepeheard, yet failing of his purpose it findeth him not, but alway runneth from corner to corner, straying vp and downe, and stil wandreth farther out of the way. Neither it is succoured with any comfort or helpe, before it heare the voice of the true shepeheard sounding againe in his eares: euen as we learne the same to be true by daily experience, and euerie man trieth it in his owne heart.

heart. For the Gospell of Christ being taken away or not exercised, here some false maister, or author of some sect, in an other place some fanaticall felowe thrusteth in himselfe, one peruerteth the Supper of the Lord, the other baptisme, one teacheth this, the other that, of a singular holines of life, both which alloureth to himselfe the miserable and straying sheepe, and sheweth himselfe so, as though he were he true shepeheard. But by the meanes of these the sheepe is entangled onely with greater errours, vntill it wandreth quite and altogither out of the way. To these commeth the deuill also with his cogitations, which he craftely putteth into the heart: Alas, if thou hadst done this or that, or hadst not done, &c. with all which he practizeth nothing els, but that he may make it fall into greater errours, that it may not know where to abyde. And this truly falleth out, Christ being remoued out of sight, and the article of him being extinguished. Whatsoeuer moreouer shalbe taught, counseled, & shewed, by what meanes soeuer, all thinges neuertheles become worse and draw nere vnto destruction, vnles the true shepeheard come with his voice, and call backe and bring againe the straying sheepe.

It is very necessarie to learne to know Christ a right.

Hereupon it appeareth that it is exceeding necessarie & conuenient, that we learne to know Christ well, that we do not behold him as a cruell tyranne or as an angrie iudge (as the preachers hitherto haue set him forth to the people, and the deuel himselfe sheweth him to the hearts of mē no otherwise to be thought vpon and cōsidered) who hath drawne his sword already against vs: But as the sheepe doth naturally looke on the shepeheard, not as on him, of whom it shall be terrified, chased, and slaine, but so soone as it beholdeth him, is cheered and put in hope of helpe, & is no more in feare or solitarines, but forthwith speedely goeth to him with all boldnes: So also when we desire to conceiue a trust and hope of helpe, and to be strengthened and eased with comfort, then the voice of our shepeheard, that is of Christ, must be knowne and learned well of vs, all voices of other shepeheards not regarded, which draw vs only into errours, and tosse vs vp and downe, and that onely article must be heard and comprehended in minde, which Christ so louingly and comfortably painteth in our heart, as by any meanes it can be painted, that I may with all confidence and boldnes say: The Lord Iesus Christ

is my onely shepeheard, and I (alas) the lost shepe, which hath strayed in the desert, but am troubled with no small anguish of mynde for my wretched life, desyring with most feruent affectiō, both to haue God fauourable vnto me, & also to haue peace in my conscience. But truely I vnderstand here, that he is no lesse desirous of me, then I am of him. I labour with great carefullnes to come vnto him, and he is carefull and desyreth greatly that he may bring me againe vnto himselfe.

If we were certainly thus perswaded of his affection towarde vs, and did graue in our minde that it so greatly desireth after vs, and is so sweetely poured forth vpon vs, it can not be, that we should abhorre and feare him, but we would with a cheerefull minde runne vnto him, and tary only with him, abyding to heare the doctrine or voice of no other. For the doctrine of an other cōming betweene, either of Moses or of any one what soeuer, doth nothing els but trouble and disquiet the conscience, so that it can neuer fynde any peace or quietnes. Therefore Christ sayth Matth. 11. Come vnto me all ye that are wearie and laden, and I will ease you. Take my yoke on you, and ye shall fynde rest vnto your soules, &c. As though he saide: runne and seeke in what places soeuer ye will, heare and learne what soeuer can be preached vnto you, yet shall ye fynde no quietnes of heart, ye shall fynde no peace but in me alone. We wil easily permit good workes to be preached, a righteous life to be taught, the ten cōmaundements to be deliuered by instruction, and all things els which serue to the amendement of life, but so farre onely, as they are taught to the vnrulely and vntractable common sort, also to force and bridle the wantonnes of our old Adam. But they which preach to the conscience wrapped in anguishes and terrours because of synne, ought to preach no other word then of Christ. For this is that lost and miserable shepe, of whom no other maister is to be borne or had, but that onely shepeheard Christ, who neither vrgeth it with the lawe, nor is eger vpon it, but most sweetely and gently handleth it, and layeth the miserable and sinfull sheepe vpon his shoulders, doing that of his owne accord, which was to be done of the sheepe, as we shall heare hyandby more at large.

No peace or quietnes but in Christ alone.

But surely in this place the doctrine of both (as is before also sayde at large) or the voice of Moses and of Christ, must be well

well discerned. For Moses ought to haue no entraunce to the lost sheepe, no nor by any meanes is to be admitted to it, although he preach best of all other. For if confounding these, we will comfort and erect the troubled conscience by the lawe after this sort: be of a good cheere, for thou hast not committed homicide, neither hast thou defiled thy selfe with adulterie, neither hast thou perpetrated any other haynous offence, or done it with a good will, &c. This also is a comfort, but which can endure a verie small time, neither can it sustaine the assaults and violence of the enemie, neither bringeth it or containeth any thing els but confidence of it selfe, wherewith the miserable sheepe is holpen nothing. For it remayneth as much wandring and lost as before, neither can it helpe it selfe, or come to his owne shepeheard. But if we will helpe & succour it, we must shew vnto it the true shepeheard, who commeth to seeke it, that hauing found it he may bring it home againe, and exhibit his voice vnto it to be heard. Hereby it may obtaine true and effectuall consolation, and be bold to aunswere Moses, and say: Now truely I haue not any care either of thy comfort or terrour, and if it please thee, amplifie my synnes as much as possibly thou canst, make me a manslayer and parricide, or the worst man of all men. For now I will neither heare thee with an astonied minde, nor follow thee. But this is the summe of my comfort and saluation, whereunto also I do confidently trust, that I haue such a shepeheard as seeketh me of his owne accord, and hauing layd me on his shoulders carieth me. Let vs enter disputation hereof if thou art so disposed, not how righteous or vnrighteous I am, but how I haue come vnto Christ.

The difference betwene the doctrine of Moses and of Christ must be throughly knowne of Christians.

Wherefore we must alwayes preach according to the capacitie and qualitie of the hearers. For I haue sayd that this doctrine is not fit for a blockish and vntractable man. As it is not meete ỳ a laborious threscher should be fed with delicates, wherewith the sicke are to be strengthened and refreshed, but the hyreling is to be fed with browne bread and chese, & with water. The other dainty meates and easy of digestion thou must reserue for the sicke or children, which are able to digest no grosse meat: So in this thing also thou must obserue the same differẽce, that thou do rightly distribute these things, and giue vnto euerie one his portiõ as a prudẽt householder. For thou must keepe the doctrine

Vnto whom Moses lawe must be preached.

of Moses and of the Lawe, vntill thou light vpon vnruly, hardened, and vntractable men, which lead their life securely and without feare, set before these onely strong and common meates of threshers to be eaten, that is, offer angrie Moses vnto them to be heard, who lighteneth and thundreth from the mount Sina, who terrifieth the people of Israel, bringeth them into the desert, and drowneth king Pharao in the red sea. But when thou shalt light vpon troubled hearts, and weake and afflicted consciences, which are now become lost sheepe, then speake not a word concerning Moses and all the workes of God done in the lawe, but let thy talke be only of the workes done by Christ in the time of grace, & well and diligently repeate to the miserable conscience, how he sheweth himselfe toward the lost shepe, to wit, that he is the gētle & good shepeheard, which is exceeding careful for the lost shepe, so that leauing all the rest, he traueleth to synde that one, and to bring it againe into the way, neither doth he leaue of till he hath brought it home. For it is a verie great griefe vnto him, that any man should be in synne, and therefore be troubled and feare, neither would he that any should remaine therein, and so perish. Wherefore he doth most louingly allure & prouoke thee by his sweete Gospell to come vnto him, & suffer thy selfe to be layd vpō his shoulders and caried, and to be called his welbeloued sheepe.

How weake and afflicted consciences must be preached vnto.

As for them that liue securely and pleasauntly, & haue no regard whether God be angrie or pleased, they are not to be called lost sheepe, but rather wilde goats, which suffer not themselues either to be fed or ruled. But he, to whom his synnes are a burden, & who fighteth in the fight of faith, where he is not in daūger to lose Moses, but Christ himselfe, and the principall article, that is, where the conscience is in anguish, and feare, whether it hath God gentle and fauourable, this is that verie man, who with groning and sighes seeketh out and crieth for his shepeheard, & desireth to be holpē, as Dauid doth Psal. 119. I haue gone astray like a sheepe that is lost: oh seeke thy seruaunt, &c. In the mouth of these this suger & these pleasaunt delicates haue a good taste, with which the heart is refreshed, that it fall not into desperation, but being againe recreated with such a consolation, is lifted vp, not by Moses but by Christ. Not that it hath Moses a freind or is able to pacifie him, but because it hath God fauourable through Christ, whersoeuer Moses remayneth with his comfort. Although

The lost sheepe.

though it be very well, as also it is meete, that we do not cõtrary to the lawe practize theuerie, that we steale not, that we commit not homicide, or otherwise do iniurie and hurt to our neighbour. Howbeit that is not the right comfort of the heart, but onely a momentane tickling of the vtmost skinne not during & pearsing. For the deuell comming & setting vpon the heart, all comfort is vtterly taken away. And although in some point thou hast done well and rightly, he neuertheles againe bringeth ten fold more, wherein thou hast done amisse, yea euen in the most pure workes he can finde much impuritie, and turne all into sinne.

No true comfort of conscience to be had by the lawe.

Wherefore we must in no wise trust vnto such comfort, but must rather refuse it and say: whether I be good or euell at this present I do not dispute, but wil reserue it rather vnto that place, where it shalbe taught and entreated concerning workes. But in this circle wherein I now stand, there is no place to entreat of workes and integrity of life, but of Christ and his workes, which he dooth toward me a lost sheepe. Wherefore if thou demaund whether I be good or honest, I aunswere plainly, no, but if thou demaund whether Christ be good and righteous, that vndoutedly I am able to confirme, and him I set for my goodnes and righteousnes, vnto whom also alone I couragiously appeale. For in his name I am baptized, of which thing I haue a seale and testimonie, to wit, that I am his shepe, & that he is that good shepeheard, seeking his lost shepe, & dealing with me without all lawe, exacting nothing of me, neither as Moses vrgeth, troubleth, and forceth me, but sheweth vnto me his meere & most sweete grace, while he submitteth himselfe to me, & layeth me on his shoulders, and carieth me. Why therefore should I feare the thundrings of Moses and of the deuell, whē as I rest in his safe custody, which hath giuen vnto me his righteousnes and all other things, which holdeth and carieth me, so that there is now no more daunger lest I perish, I remaining a sheepe and denying not my shepeheard, but reposing my selfe wholy in him?

We must not trust to the comfort of ỹ law, but must resort and cleaue fast vnto Christ.

Thus hast thou Christ most louingly set forth, vnto thee. Now onely faith is required, whereof there is great neede. For this doctrine is excellent, & replenished with most sweete consolation and comfort, but this is wanting, that the vse thereof is not felt, where it ought to be felt. For when the shepe goeth astray, that is, when a man feeleth himselfe grieued with his synnes, and can

A hard thing to feele true comfort of conscience.

not tell where to abyde, and is cast of the deuell into a great feare of minde, then he alwayes runneth vnto the contrary, neither can he comprehend or conceyue in minde, that this is true, all things falling out of his minde, which he heard here, because of the present feeling and feare. For the deuell hath daseled his eyes, neither can he perceiue any thing els but the wrath and indignation of God. Wherewith his heart is so burdened, that he is not able to raise vp himselfe in minde, and to turne his eyes any other where. Nay he lyeth so drowned in it, that Christ appeareth no otherwise vnto him but as an angrie iudge, as he hath hitherto beene painted out, and is so beaten into the hearts of all by the wicked Papists, sitting on the rayne bowe, with a swoord comming out of his mouth. For this is one of the most deceitfull crafts of the deuell, yea and of his mischiefes which he practizeth against the miserable shepe, to dasle his eyes, that he may not know any more his owne shepeheard, & vnder a pretence of Christ to leade a man to Moses, disputing as much of Christ, as he had accustomed to do before of Moses. Wherefore we haue neede of a strong & firme faith, that we may beleeue these things to be true, when a man himselfe must dispute euen against himselfe. For the sense is vehemēt of it selfe, whereunto the deuil also commeth marueilously amplifying synne & terrour, the greatnes and anguish whereof is able to consume euen the marrow in the bones, yea and the heart in the body. It can not therefore be perfectly learned so soone as some thinke. In prosperitie it is easilie beleeued that Christ is sweete and amiable but anguish and terrour comming vpon & ouer whelming the minde, man is blinde and without good vnderstanding, and will iudge only according to the sense and vnderstanding of his owne heart, which he followeth, and confirmeth himselfe in his owne errour. For he is taken therein, and can thinke no otherwise, but that it is true, and neuertheles it is not true.

How a Christian must speake vnto his owne heart.

Now it were a point of this art, for a man thus to say vnto his heart, if thou confes thy selfe to be a lost sheepe, thou sayest right: but that thou wilt therefore runne from Christ, and so thinke of him in thy minde, as though he were a man, which would chase and terrifie thee, it is a suggestion and tentation of the deuel. For if thou didst rightly consider him, and confes him as thy true shepeheard, then wouldest thou not flie from his sight, neither wouldest

wouldest conceiue terrour in thy minde, but with all cheerefulnes and boldnes wouldest runne vnto him. For surely he is not therefore ready at hand that he may condemne thee, but he commeth to thee, seeking thee, that hauing layde thee on his shoulders, he may carie thee, and exempt & deliuer thee from sinnes, errours, the deuill and his power, yea and from all perill. Thou perceiuest therefore that thou art a sinner, and hast deserued indignatiõ, so much more earnestly is that shepeheard to be sought and called for of thee, that he may deliuer thee from it: of whom consider no otherwise in thy minde, then the shepe doth of his owne shepeheard, whome it can not feare, but seing and hearing him becommeth glad and cheereful, although it hath runne from him, so that for this deede it hath a sufficient cause to feare. The whole matter therefore consisteth onely in this, that thou do perfectly learne Christ aright, & cõsider him according to the word of God, and not according to the proper cogitatiõs of thy minde, and thine owne senses. For the cogitations of men are false and lying, but his wordes are true and can not deceiue. Wherefore the worde alone is to be engrauen in our heart, and we must cleaue vnto it with a constant mynde, whereby we may reproue our owne heart of lying. For it alone must be true, and all things els that are contrarie to it, false and vaine. But truly this is an arte, whereof I am ignoraunt, but much more those other light spirites, who boaste many thinges of it, as they that know all things, when as they haue euen once heard any thing thereof, and neuertheles they do not a litle perceiue or trie so much as any whit of it. For it is an easie thing to speake and preach of it, but how hard a thing it is to proue it in deede, they onely haue experience, who earnestly make triall thereof.

We must cõsider Christ according to the word of God.

This is a most amiable demonstration of our Christ, described by himselfe in this Gospell, wherein he hath most aboundantly poured forth the flames of his most feruent heart, and affection toward vs, shewing that he hath exceeding great care and regard to recouer his shepe, which alone leauing ninety and nine he seeketh and enquireth diligently for, not to terrifie it and beate it, but that he may helpe it, and hauing found it, may bring it home, and with his louing and sweete voice and speaking vnto it may chere it being miserable and afflicted in conscience. By all which thou seest, how acceptable a thing thou shalt do vnto

him, if thou truste and cleaue vnto him with thy whole heart, and promise to thy selfe from him all goodnes and loue.

Secondly thou plainly seest this also, how by all maner of outward signes & meanes he poureth forth his ioy and vnspeakeable goodnes, and also hauing found his sheepe how louing he sheweth himselfe. For surely he dealeth not with it by any law, as by his right he might deale, and driue it before him as he doth the rest, or suffer it to go by him. Howbeit he doth none of these, but layeth it vpon his shoulders, and all the iourny carieth it through the desert, taking all the labour and trouble vpon himselfe, that at the lest wise the sheepe may rest. Neither doth he it grudginly but willingly, for he is full of ioy for his sheepe recouered. Now marke this also, how wel it goeth with the shepe, with how great quietnes and ease it lyeth on his shepeheards shoulders, neither doth it vnwillingly see it selfe resting so sweetly being deliuered from the difficulty of the iourney, as also voyd of all feare both of dogs and woulues, that is, of all errours and lyes, yea and of all perils and mischiefes. And this surely deserueth to be called a very pleasaunt picture, exceeding amiable and comfortable to be looked vpon.

No otherwise doth our Lord Iesus Christ deale with vs, whiles he deliuereth vs, which he hath once done corporally by his passion and death, but now doth eftsoones the same by his power, and spiritually by the preaching of his word. Wherefore he layeth vs vpon his shoulders, carieth, and defendeth vs, so that we are safe from all perils of death and the deuell, which albeit they terrifie vs, and shew themselues so, as though they would deuour vs, yet preuaile they nothing. For whereas we are caried, it is a safegard vnto vs, and the same exempteth vs from all daungers, and putteth awaye all feare. As the shepe lying vpon the shepeheards shoulders is litle careful, though the dogs barke much, and the woulfe craftily goeth vp and downe, but rather hanging downe the head is quiet and sleepeth soundly. So we also, if we stand and abyde vnmoueably in this article, I beleeue in Iesus Christ our Lord, who suffred, died, rose againe for vs, &c. there is no cause why we should be carefull lest we perish, or be deuoured of the deuell, though he open his iawes neuer so wide. For we are not then in our own waye, neither walke we vpon our owne feete, but we hange vpon the necke of

If we beleue assuredly in Christ Iesus, we need not feare the deuell, rage he neuer so sore.

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our shepeheard, and lye vpon his shoulders, where we are safe enough. For sinne, death, and hell, although in deede they be terrible, yet dare they not set vpon him, otherwise if it were not for this, we should be miserable shepe, which should forthwith be brought into a lamētable and wretched case. For euen as a shepe can not take heede and foresee to it selfe, that it stray not out of the way, vnles it be led of the shepeheard, & when it hath straied and is lost, can not by it selfe come againe to the shepeheard, but must be sought and enquired for of him, vntill he hath found it, and so must be layd vpō his shoulders and brought home againe, lest that it be againe fraied and chased from him, or catcht of the woulfe and rent in pieces: So we also our selues can profite our selues neither by helpe, nor counsel, that we might obtaine peace and quietnes of conscience, and escape out of the hands of the deuell, death, and hell, except Christ himselfe repeat his word vnto vs, and call vs againe vnto him. And although we come vnto him, and now stand in faith, yet is it not in our powre to keepe our selues therein, or to stand by our owne strength, vnles he eftsoones by the power of his Word, hold, lift vp, and carie vs, for that the deuell alwayes imagineth and purposeth deceit and destruction toward vs, and goeth about like a roring lyon, seeking whom he may deuour, as S. Peter witnesseth. Wherefore here is no place to boast of free will, or of our owne strength, which is none, neither in beginning any thing, neither in going forward therein, much lesse in perseuering or continuing in it, but Christ our shepeheard alone doth all things.

Howbeit we are sure hereof, that whiles we lye vpon the shoulders of Christ, we shall remayne safe from all terrour and misfortune. For he will not suffer vs to be plucked or taken from his necke, neither will he himselfe cast vs of, being so glad and ioyfull, that he hath found his lost shepe, and brought it againe to the rest of the flocke. And in a summe, here is no terrour, or trouble, or exaction, but mere life and grace, whereby he handleth his shepe most louingly and gently. But on the contrarie Moses, not as a shepeheard of miserable and weake sheepe, but as a maister of stronger cattell, driueth his heards with a staffe and a rod three dayes iourney through the desert, vntill they be tyred and wearie with walking: of this shepeheard those hardened and wilde ones are to be tamed and bridled. And we also,

when we shalbe vnder Moses, to wit, according to the flesh and the outward life, must goe, and do that which the law requireth. But in that we are, and are called Christians, we must by no meanes suffer, that any worke be layed vpon vs, yea or exacted of vs, but must giue our selues onely to Christ to be caried and gentlely lifted vp, not vpon horses and charrets, but euen vpon his onely shoulders. Which commeth to passe, as I haue sayd, when he suffreth the word to be preached vnto vs, and we also beleeue the same, that he died for vs, that on the crosse he bare our sinnes in his body, that he hath ouerthrowne the deuell, death, and synnes, and put them vnder his feete, and hath made and opened vnto vs entraunce to eternall life. Wherefore we must not haue respect to our owne life, how righteous and strong we are, but we must studie vpon his one thing, that we may rest lying vpon his shoulders. In this circle we must haue no care of synne, death, life, or penstuenes, inasmuch as we haue all things to the full in Christ, who beareth and keepeth vs.

Whē Christ carieth vs vpō his shoulders.

Now he is not content with all these things, both that with such great trauell he seeketh his shepe, and also that hauing found it, he carieth it with incredible ioy, but it being brought againe, he maketh festiual dayes, & exceedingly reioyceth, calling togither his neighbours and friendes that they may reioyce with him. Yea he affirmeth, that God also in heauen with the whole heauenly host do reioyce ouer one synner that repenteth. In which wordes he sheweth and declareth, who he is, which deserueth to be called his lost shepe, namely such a synner, as being led by repentaunce of his former life, doth amend, most feruently desyring to be deliuered from synnes, and earnestly endeuouring to come vnto Christ: such a one hath a miserable and troubled, yea and a contrite and humbled heart, and an afflicted conscience, which the deuell by all meanes fighteth against, and so presseth it, that it is almost ouercome with distresses, &c. But Christ afflicteth and comforteth him, for he is such a man, as seeketh no shepe but that which is lost, and can not helpe it selfe.

Exceeding ioy becaufe of the sheepe which was lost and is fou̇d againe.

How may Christ be preached with greater gentlenes, and more effectuall consolatiō of words? or what thinkest thou should he do more to cheere the mind of a sinner, and to confirme in him a sure confidence toward himselfe? For we see him set forth by himselfe to vs miserable synners as a most louing shepeheard,

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who moſt ſorrowfully ſeeketh his ſheepe being loſt, and moſt ioyfully bringeth them againe being found, and taketh ſo great ioy, that with him all the Angells alſo and Saincctes doe reioyce ouer vs.

Now he that could firmely beleeue theſe thinges, ſhould without dout through Chriſt receiue true comfort and ioy, forasmuch as here he hath a certaine promiſe, that if he ſurely cleaue vnto Chriſt, and reſt vpon his ſhoulders, he ſhall be an acceptable and welcome gueſt in the kingdom of heauen, and ſhall be receyued with exceeding great ioye. But we being troubled with ſorrowe and anguiſh of conſcience, haue a farre other feeling and affection, when as the hart can thinke nothing elſe, but that all the Angells doe ſtand behind vs with a drawne ſword, which feare ſo troubleth vs, that we can conceiue no cheerefulnes in our minde, neither of God, nor of the Angells. And there are ſome alſo, which can behold no creature with a glad minde, fearing the beholding of the ſunne, yea being ſore afraid at the noyſe of a leafe. All which proceede from hence, for that they trouble and vexe them ſelues with their owne thoughtes, out of which they would willingly wraſtle, ſparing no labour, that they might feele that vprightnes and integritie in them, which would be abaſhed with no feare. But if thou be deſirous to conceiue true comfort and ioye in thy hart, then ſee that thou doe diligently and well print and faſten therein this amiable image of the moſt louing ſhepeheard, and the word of the Goſpell, and ſeeke it, where it is to be ſought, that is, in Chriſt and no where elſe: for in this man thou ſhalt find all thinges, ſo that thou abide in his ſafe cuſtodie and vpon his ſhoulders. But whatſoeuer comfort can be obtained without him, it commeth not from the hart, although thou call to helpe thee all the creatures, and ſhouldeſt alſo be partaker of the pleaſure and ioy of the whole worlde.

In Chriſt true ioy is to be found, & without him can be found no true ioy at all.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER OF THE WOMAN OF CANAAN.

Matth. 15.

Verse. 21. AND Iesus went thence, and departed into the partes of Tyrus and Sidon.

22. And behold, a womã a Cananite came out of the same coastes, and cryed, saying vnto him, Haue mercy on me, O Lord, the sonne of Dauid: my daughter is miserably vexed with a Deuill.

23. But he aunswered her not a word. Then came to him his Disciples & besought him, saying: Send her away, for she cryeth after vs.

24. But he aunswered and sayd: I am not sent but vnto the lost sheepe of the house of Israell.

25. Yet she came & worshipped him, saying, Lord helpe me.

26. And he aunswered & said, it is not good to take the childrens bread, and to cast it to whelps.

27. But she sayd, truth Lord: yet in deed the welps eate of the crommes, which fall from their maisters table.

28. Then Iesus aunswered and sayde vnto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it to thee as thou desirest. And her daughter was made whole at that houre.

IN this text is set forth vnto vs an example of a constant and stedfast faith. For this woman did so persteuer, that she ouercame three most sharpe conflicts, and notably teacheth vs, what is the qualitie and proper vertue of a true & right faith. Which in deede is a certaine trust, and most deepely setled in the mind, of the diuine goodnes and grace, knowne and made manifest by the worde of God. For Marke mentioneth that she heard the report of Iesus, without dout good and ioyfull, that he is a bountifull man, and maruelous ready to helpe euery one. That report was good tidings & the worde of grace vnto her, whereupon also this her faith did begin. For vnles she had beleued that she also might be made partaker of Christes bountifulnes and goodnes, shee would not haue so followed him, or cried after him. Which is that wherof we haue often admonished, & which we are taught Rom. 10. that faith is by hearing. Wherefore the word ought alwayes to goe before, and giue the beginning of saluation. But how came it to passe, whereas many other also heard the same report of our Sauiour Iesus, yet they followed him not, yea they quite despised that report? I aunswere. They that are not sicke, as they haue no neede of the Phisitian, so neither are they desirous of him. But this woman was afflicted and felt her necessitie, yea that report was so ioyfull vnto her, that she being stirred vp thereby, did follow Christ, running after such a pleasant sauour. Cant. 1. Wherfore Moses must alway goe before, who may teach vs to feele sinne, whereby grace may be wished for and desired of vs. It is in vaine therefore, although Christ be preached to be louing, and to be desired and longed for, if a man be not before humbled through knowledge of him selfe, and made desirous of Christ, according to the songe of Marie: The Lorde hath filled the hungrie with good thinges, and the rich he hath sent emptie away. Nowe all these thinges are written for the consolation & lifting vp of them which be miserable, poore, needie, oppressed with sinnes, and abiects, that they may knowe to whom they may flie in all distres, and where they may seeke for helpe and safetie.

Faith what it is.

Faith commeth by hearing.

We must first by the law come to the knowledge & feeling of sinne, before we cã tast howe sweete Christ is.

But see howe Christ vrgeth and inflameth faith in them that be his, whereby they may become stronger and more confirmed. For first, whereas this woman being encouraged with that alluring fame of his, goeth after him, and cryeth for helpe, douting

nothing but she should trie him to be such a one, as she had heard him reported to be, and that she should forthwith entreat him for the recouerie of her daughter: Christ in all respects sheweth him selfe vnto her so, as though he would deceiue all her trust, and make his report false, so that she might thinke with her selfe: Is this that man which is so bountiful and readie to helpe all? Doth he so fulfill the most commendable report which goeth of him? Where doth there appeare so much as any thing like vnto those thinges, which men haue told me of him? They were deceiued them selues and deceiued me also. He sheweth him selfe an enemie rather then a friende. Why doth he not so much as speake a word, and friendly denie me helpe, if I be vnworthy thereof? He holdeth his peace like vnto a blocke, & vouchsafeth not to speake a word, neither offereth his help. Here surely Christ gaue a grieuous blow to the minde of the silly woman. So it is an incomparable torment to them that beleeue, being in distres, when God sheweth him selfe such a one at their prayers, like vnto one that is angrie, and whom they pray vnto in vayne, hiding so deepely his grace, that they now perceiue nothing els, but that he will not performe those thinges which he hath promised, and that so he will shew his owne wordes to be false. That truely hapned to the Israelites at the red sea, and to many other excellent holy men. But what doth this woman to these things? She remoueth out of her sight & mind, that Christ shewed him selfe so vngentle and hard to be intreated, she being constant and nothing moued hereat, perseuereth in the trust of his goodnes, whereof she had heard, and which she had conceiued in her minde, suffering her selfe in no wise to be turned from it. So also must we do, we must trust vnto the word alone, although God him selfe and all creatures pretende otherwise then the worde preacheth. But this is thyse most hard to nature & reason, to be so vtterly destitute, and to depend on the word of God without any feeling of comfort, euen when a man feeleth and trieth all things to be contrary. God giue vnto vs such a mind and faith, that we may so doe, especially at the point of death and in extreme necessities.

The constancie of this woman of Canaan.

We must not ceasse to trust in God, though he seemeth at the first not to heare our prayers, nor to fulfill his promise.

Secondly, whereas the cry and faith of this woman seemeth to haue suffered repulse, the disciples come with their faith, douting not but that they shal entreat the Lord, but when they thinke that they shall make him more easie to be entreated, they find him

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to be much more harde, repelling as it appeared, and as they thought, the faith and prayers both of the woman & also of them selues. Neither doth Christ here hold his peace, and leaue them in doubte, as before, but he seemeth plainely to deny that which they aske, saying: I am not sent but to the lost sheepe of the house of Israel. This stroke is much more grieuous then that former, where not onely the person of the intreater is repelled, but al hope also which is wont to be left, is cut of, namely the comfort of the intercession of all the other Saintes and elect. For it is almost the last refuge to them that suffer distres and feele the indignation of God, to get them selues to godly & holy men, seeking for comfort and helpe, whereunto, as charitie requireth, they find them ready and willing, but euen they also some time doe in vaine aske helpe and succour, for neither are they heard, and so the case of them that be in distres becommeth worse and more lamentable. So the afflicted and desolate may truely obiect vnto Christ all those wordes, wherein he hath promised that he will heare his Saintes, as: If two of you shall agree in earth vpon any thing whatsoeuer they shall desire, it shall be giuen them of my Father which is in heauen. Againe, VVhatsoeuer ye shall aske, beleeue, and ye shall receiue it. And many such like. But if to him that obiecteth these thinges, and asketh him howe he can goe from his wordes and promises, he aunswere thus: I goe not from my promises, I haue not promised that I will heare all prayers, but the prayers of them that be myne, which are of the house of Israell, not of all whatsoeuer. What thinkest thou may the hart then thinke hauing taken such a repulse? Such an aunswere is as it were a flash of lightning, wherewith the hart and all trust is seuered and broken in a thousand peeces. For what trust can there be left, when he heareth that that doth not pertaine vnto him, which because of the word of God he trusted to haue obtayned, but vnto others. Here not so much as a worde can be left, if one doe according as he feeleth. But what doth this woman? She doth not so fall from hope, she still sticketh to the wordes which she had heard of Christ, albeit he went about by this other repulse as with a certaine force to wrest them out of her hart, she suffereth not her self to be fraied away neither w that vngentle silence, neither with this hard aunswere, shee continueth stedfastly in a sure confidence, beleeuing that vnder this difficultie which

Matth. 18.19

Marke 11.24

The great constancie & faith of this woman of Canaan.

Christ did pretend, that grace was as yet hidden and layd by for her, which she had heard reported of him, shee can not be brought as yet to iudge Christ not to be bountiful and gracious, and that he can deny the helpe which shee desireth. This was to perseuer strongly in faith.

Moreouer she followeth Iesus euen into the house, as Marke writeth, she is instant vpon him, falleth downe before him, and sayth: Lord helpe me. Here the Lorde giueth a deadly & the last blow saying vnto her face, that she is a dogge, and vnworthy to be partaker of the bread of the children. What may she aunswere hereunto? For he seemed to signifie in these wordes that she is of the number of the damned and desperat, which can looke for no part with the elect. This word seemeth eternall and that can not be gainesayd: For he which doth not pertaine to the companie of the elect by the ordinaunce of God, what may he hope to be left for him? This woman is not yet discouraged and past hope, but yeldeth to this iudgement of the Lord, she confesseth of her owne accorde, that she is a dogge, neither desireth she any thing but that which is wont to be giuen to dogges, namely the crummes which fall from their maisters table. Seemeth she not to haue vsed maruelous cunning? She taketh Christ in his owne wordes. He had made her like vnto a dogge, she acknowledgeth it, and desireth that he will onely suffer her to be a dogge according to his owne saying: what should he here do? how should he escape? he was now as it were euen taken. For the crummes vnder the table are graunted to the dogge, for vnto dogges they are sayd to be due. Here therefore Christ being as it were ouercome, doth open him selfe wholy, and graunteth the desires of the woman, and maketh that she is not now a dogge, but a true Israelite.

The frute of constant perseuerance & trust in Christ.

These things are written for the instruction and comfort of all vs, whereby we ought to learne, howe deepely sometime Christ hideth his grace from vs, and how we must not iudge of God according to our owne sense and opinion, but onely according to his wordes. For we see here, that albeit Christ shewed him selfe very hard to this woman, yet he did not plainely deny to helpe her, but whatsoeuer he aunswered, howsoeuer it seemed to pretend a deniall, yet was it not a deniall, but did hange in dout, and left an entraunce for faith, although but small. For he sayd not at her first petition: I will not heare her, but he held his peace, neither promising

promising nor denying helpe. So to the second petition, which the Apostles made, he sayth not: she is not of the house of Israel, I can not therefore performe that which she desireth, but he onely sayth: I am not sent, but to the lost sheepe of the house of Israell, leauing all thinges in doute, and in the middest betweene a plaine graunt and a denial. So when she had the third time desired him, he sayth not: thou art a dogge, get thee hence, the bread of the children is not due vnto thee, but he sayth: It is not good to take the childrens bread, &c. againe leauing in dout, whether she was a dogge or no. Neuertheles all these sayinges doe pretende outwardly rather a denial of helpe, then prouoke her to hope, but in very deede they did containe in them rather a promise and hope, then a denial. Yea there was nothing but a promise and a certaine expectation of helpe, (howbeit most deepely hid and altogither secret) vnder that silence and aunswers, although they were hard, and a denial onely sounded outwardly. By these it is shewed how our hart is wont to be affected in tentation. For according as that feeleth in tentation, so Christ here behaueth him selfe. It feeleth all thinges to be denied, when as it is farre otherwise. Wherefore it is requisite, that leauing it owne feeling, by a sure faith in the word of God it conceiue and hold fast the promise of helpe, deepely hidden vnder the denial, and yeeld vnto the sentence of God toward vs, as this woman did, so shall we ouercome and take the Lord in his wordes, that he can not but helpe vs. So that if we feele in our conscience at any time God rebuking vs, pronouncing vs sinners, and vnworthy of the kingdom of heauen, then we feele as it were hell, and it seemeth vnto vs that we are past all hope and recouerie for euer: then if any had the skill of this woman, that he could take the Lord in his owne iudgement and say: yea Lord, I am a sinner, and altogither vnworthy of thy grace, but thou hast promised forgiuenes to sinners, neither didst thou come to call the righteous, but as Paule sayth, to saue sinners: he truely shoulde bringe to passe that the Lorde should be enforced, euen by his owne iudgement to haue mercy vpon him. So did Manasses, when being penitēt he prayed for pardon, as we read in his prayer: He yeelded to the iudgement of God, acknowledging him selfe a most grieuous sinner, and so he bound God with his promise, which had promised forgiuenes of sinne to sinners, not to the righteous. The same also

When God pronounceth vs sinners, we ought to acknowledge and confesse our sinnes, & pray for mercye, which God hath promised to them that be penitent for their sinnes.

did Dauid obserue Psal. 51? Against thee onely, sayth he, haue I sinned, and done this euill in thy sight, that thou mightest be iustified in thy saying, and found pure when thou art iudged. For that doth purchase vnto vs all displeasure, that we disdayne to suffer the iudgement of the Lord, and doe against our wills yeeld vnto his sentence, when he pronounceth vs sinners. Such a great thing is it to acknowledge sinnes, and to embrace the iudgement of God. We all confesse our selues sinners in words, but as soone as the Lorde speaketh that in our hart, and pronounceth vs sinners, we doe not abide by that which before we confessed, we had leuer be counted righteous and free from that iudgement. But it must needes be, if God must be iust in his wordes, that thou be a sinner, then also maist thou vse the right of sinners, which God him selfe hath giuen vnto them, namely to pray with a sure expectation of forgiuenes of sinnes. Then is it not permitted vnto thee onely to feede vnder the table of crummes after the maner of dogges, but being a child of the houshold, thou shalt sit at the very table, hauing God nowe howe great soeuer he be, giuen vnto thee according to thy desire. Hereof also we haue an historicall exposition of this text according to ỹ allegories. For as it chaunceth to this woman her daughter being sicke, for whom through faith she obtayned health by a miracle: so also falleth it out with vs, when we are deliuered from ỹ spirituall sicknes to wit sinnes, which truely are a most grieuous and troublesom Deuill vnto vs. For as she acknowledged her selfe a dogge, so must we acknowledge our selues sinners and iudged vnto hell, the Lord pronouncing it, which if we can doe as she coulde, we shall be safe. We haue already spoken elsewhere of other thinges, whereof there might be occasion to speake out of this text, as howe one may obtaine grace and saftie by the faith of an other, as here it fell out to the daughter of this woman. This thinge also (that Christ, his Disciples, and the woman are here examples of loue, forasmuch as none of them pray for, seeke or doe those thinges that are their owne, but euery one that which is an others) is very manifest by it selfe, and easily acknowledged of euery one, especiall ỹ seing that we haue so largely entreated hereof in an other place.

Christ, the Disciples, & the woman in this place are examples of loue.

A

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, WHEREIN IS TAVGHT THAT WE ARE SAVED freely by grace, without the workes and merits of men.

Tit. 3.

Verse. 4. WHen that bountifulnes & that loue of God our Sauiour towarde men appeared,

5. Not by the workes of righteousnes, which we had done, but according to his mercie he saued vs, by the washing of the newe birth, and the renuing of the holy Ghost,

6. Which he shed on vs aboundantly, through Iesus Christ our Sauiour,

7. That we, being iustified by his grace, should be made heires according to the hope of eternall life.

PAVLE hauing willed before that all shoulde be put in mind to be obedient to such as be in authoritie, and ready to euery good worke, to speake euill of no man, to be no fighters, but gentle, shewing all meekenes vnto all men, &c: these fewe wordes being put betweene, that we our selues were in times past vnwise, disobedient, deceiued, seruing diuers lustes and voluptuousnes, &c: he added those wordes which we haue already mentioned, as if he should say: Wherefore should it grieue vs to deserue so well of all men, when as God hath before dealt so bountifully, kindely, and gently with vs, with whom without comparison, we

A most weighty cause to moue vs to

doe good to our neighbours.

are lesse, and haue lesse of him deserued, then any being compared to vs can be, or can deserue of vs? As therefore God hath with exceeding bountifulnes and kindenes most gently behaued him selfe toward vs, of his mercy graunting and giuing vnto vs all thinges: so ought we to doe all thinges with all charitie and good will toward our neighbours, albeit they haue otherwise deserued, forasmuch as we were like vnto them, subiect to all sinnes and euill desires. Here we see how the Apostle will haue vs to be affected toward men: He will haue vs subiect to them that be in authoritie, kinde vnto others, and readie to doe well vnto them with all gentlenes, although they be euill, blinde, and in errour, that we grudge not to beare these thinges, and as much as lyeth in vs, endeuour to doe them good, taking all things in good part, considering that God hath so dealt with vs, when we were euill and wicked, like vnto them.

How we must behaue our selues toward men.

This word, appeared, we haue elsewhere declared to signifie the reuelation of the Gospell, whereby Christ appeared in the world: Albeit the vnskilfulnes of Ministers hath wrested it to the carnall natiuitie of Christ. He vseth not here the word grace, which he vsed before, but hath set in steed therof two other words of maruelous comfort, [bountifulnes, and loue toward men] which he attributeth to our God. The first is called of the Grecians Chrestotes, and is that kindnes, gentlenes and sweetenes of conditions, wherewith they that be endued, with them all of vs are with pleasure conuersant, & maruelously delighted with their companie, so that they doe with this their gentlenes and kindnes allure & greatly prouoke all men to loue them. For such can suffer all without griefe: they contemne no man: they repell or put none from them with bitter, hard, and disordered conditions: accesse vnto them is not hard, but they are so open, and ready for al, that euery one dare resort vnto them, and desire their helpe. And to conclude: they are such men as the Gospells describe Christ vnto vs, whom they declare to be gentle to all, a despiser of none, which denieth no benefit to any, pliant, prepared and ready to do good to all. So God also by the Gospell is preached and offered vnto vs wholy good, bountifull and sweete, open to all, reiecting none, bearing all our sinnes and offences, repelling no man from him with excessiue seueritie. For we read and heare nothing to be declared in the Gospell but meere grace, and meere goodnes,

Tit. 2. 11.

Bountifulnes

where-

whereby he doth most mercifully beare vs, & most gently handle vs, and not any man according to his deserts. This is the time of grace, wherein it is graunted to all to goe with great boldnes vnto the throne of grace, as it is written Heb. 4. and Psal. 34: Come vnto him, and be enlightened, and your faces shall not be ashamed, that is, he will not suffer you to pray and come in vaine, neither to returne with confusion being frustrate.

The other word is Philanthropia, loue of men, as couetousnes may be called loue of money, as Dauid 2. Sam. 1. calleth the desire of women, the loue of women. And the Philosophers cal certaine liuing creatures Philanthropa, that is louing toward men, as are horses, dogges, dolphins. For these creatures are by nature delighted with man, they desire his company, & do willingly serue him, as though they were moued with some reason & sense of humanity. This name, & such loue the Apostle here attributeth to our God, which Moses also did before him, Deut. 33: where he speaketh thus of God: The Lord appeared hauing in his right hand a law of fire, and he loued the people. The meaning therefore of the Apostle is this: Our God hath in the Gospell shewed him selfe vnto vs not onely bountifull, kinde, gentle, and sweete, which can beare, and will receiue all, but also he so loueth vs, that of his owne accord he adioyneth him self vnto vs, seeketh to haue to doe with vs, voluntarily sheweth and offereth his grace and bountifulnes vnto vs, and most gently embraceth as many as only doe not refuse his grace and loue, and desire to drawe nie vnto him. What should he doe more? Who can not see hereby, why we count the Gospell a preaching, ioyfull and full of all consolation of God in Christ? For what can be spoken more louingly and sweetely to a sinnefull and afflicted conscience, then these wordes? O lamentable case, how miserably hath Satan by the lawes of his Pope oppressed and obscured this souereigne syncerite of the word of God. Loue toward men.

Now let no man restraine these two wordes [bountifulnes, & loue toward men] to the persons, for God is plainly without respect of persons bountifull to all, and a louer of all, otherwise if we shoulde here make a difference betweene men, we shoulde acknowledge that some thing is receiued through our merits, and not all thinges through his mercy. Where it must be well marked, that God is sayd to be a louer of men, not of this or that na- No respect of persons with God.

ture onely, not yeld with loue of the person, and therefore these two, bountifulnes, and loue toward men, must be taken after a generall sort, that in all thinges the chiefe praise may be attributed to his mercy, that no man trust in his owne merits, neither be terrified with sinnes, but that all togither doe trust to his grace, which he voluntarily offereth vnto vs with so great kindnes and loue toward vs. For if any respect of person might be had here, it should surely be had of them, which are rich in the workes of righteousnes, but Paul expressely reiecteth these, saying: Not by the workes of righteousnes, which we had done. Howe much lesse then shall this bountifulnes and loue of our God toward men appeare, because of any mans wisedome, power, nobilitie, riches or any such thing, when as no respect is had of workes of righteousnes? Great is the grace of God toward vs, which appeareth in the Gospell, yea and nothing but grace, which admitteth no merit at all of ours, vtterly taketh away all boasting and glorying, and setteth forth the glory of God alone, who freely giueth it vnto vs being vnworthy. So in this text these two, faith and loue, are taught to receiue benefits of God, and bestow them on our neighbours, which the Scripture doth very often repeate, so that euen the doctrine of saluation consisteth wholy in them, neither can one be separated from the other. For he that doth not firmely trust in the diuine grace, can not but be remisse and slow to doe well to his neighbour, and so witnes the faintnes and weakenes of faith, which is the fountaine of all duties and benefites: As contrariwise the stronger faith that one is endued with, so much more dutifully and with readier minde he endeuoureth to deserue well of his neighbours.

The doctrin of our saluation consisteth in faith and loue.

All both doctrine and life worthy of Christ, (that all thinges may be declared most briefly, manifestly and sufficiently) consist of these two, faith and loue. Whereby man is made as it were a meane betwene God and his neighbours, that he may receiue of God from aboue, and may giue to his neighbours beneath, & be as it were a conduit pipe, through which the fountaine of the diuine goodnes doth continually flow to his neighbours. And such men are like vnto God, which in Christ receiue of God whatsoeuer he hath, and doe againe by their good deedes declare themselues as it were the goods of other, and fulfill the prophecie of the Prophet Psalme 82: I haue sayde, ye are gods, and

By faith and loue man is made as it were a meane betwene God & his neighbours.

ye

ye all are children of the most high. We are children of the most high by faith, whereby of nothinge we are made the heires of God. And we are gods by loue, which maketh vs beneficiall to our neighbour: forasmuch as the nature of God is nothinge but bountifulnes, and Paul here sayth: the bountifulnes and loue of God toward men, which he doth with incomparable plentie daily poure forth vpon euery one, as we see. We must onely endeuour, that euery one doe nothing doubt that these thinges are spoken to him, that the bountifulnes and loue of God to manward is reuealed and offered to euery one, that by these wordes he may establish, exercise, and strengthen his faith, being certain that they are most true, and that God both vndoutedly is, and alwayes will be bountifull and louing toward him. If thou canst beleeue this, it will assuredly so come vnto thee: thou maist then with a full confidence pray and desire of him whatsoeuer thou wilt, and complayne vnto him of whatsoeuer doth grieue thee or other. But if thou want this faith, it had bene better for thee neuer to haue heard any thing hereof, for that by thy infidelity thou reprouest of falshood these wordes so precious and full of consolation and grace, making so light account of them, as not beleeuing that they be true. Which surely is a great contempt and dishonour of God, that scarce a more grieuous sinne can be committed of thee. Contrariwise if thou be endued with this faith, it cannot be, but that thy hart being thereby cheered, should euen as it were laughe and leape for holy ioy in God, being void of all care and trouble, and be made aboue measure confident. For how can any discouragement, any whit of sorrowe remayne in that hart, which douteth not that God is gracious and bountifull vnto it, and beareth a singular affection of loue toward it, that it is a delight and pleasure vnto him to doe it good, and enioy it as a friende? Surely the hart is necessarily delighted with this spirituall ioy and pleasure, or vndoutedly it wanteth faith. Paule in the Epistle to the Gal. calleth this, to receiue the holy Ghost by the Gospell. For the Gospell is so pleasant a preaching of the grace and goodnes of God, that while it is preached and heard, it bringeth the holy Ghost with it, no otherwise then the beames of the sunne doe naturally bring heat with them.

The meanes to be partaker of the bountifulnes and loue of God is to beleeue.

How could the Apostle vse more pleasaunt and sweete wordes? I dare say that I haue in the whole Scripture redde none more

pleasaunt, and so sweete wordes of the grace of God, as these two, Chrestotes, & Philanthropia, that is, bountifulnes, and loue toward men, in which ỹ grace of God is so described, as wherby he doth not onely forgiue our sinnes, but doth also desire to be conuersaunt with vs, and is ready to doe the part of a very friend toward vs, voluntarily offering him selfe to helpe vs in al thinges, also to bestowe more benefites vpon vs then we can desire or aske, that we may presume of him no otherwise then of a most neare & familiar friend, of whom we may obtayne all thinges, in whose eyes we are most deare, and euen delightfull. Thinke in thy minde of a most perfect friend, which hath fulfilled all the partes of friendship toward thee, & thou shalt haue after a sort a forme, although yet farre vnlike, of the diuine goodnes and kindenes, which is here attributed to our God, by the name of bountifulnes and loue toward men. But when thou hast a sounde faith in this bountifulnes and loue to manward, and thereby doost liue in thy God, so bountifull, gracious, and gentle to thee, reioycest, and art full of all good thinges, being certayne of his continuall grace, what shouldest thou doe any longer in earth? what in this life?

How louing God is toward vs.

He that is partaker of the bountifulnes and loue of God can not be idle.

Thou canst not in this case be idle, as surely that loue of God and pleasure which thou enioyest in him will not suffer thee to be idle. Thou shalt be enflamed with a marueilous study and desire to doe what things soeuer thou canst know will be an honour vnto thy God, so louing and bountifull vnto thee, and will turne to praise, glory, and thankes giuing vnto him. Thou shalt haue no choise of workes, thou shalt passe for no precept, thou shalt feele no compulsion of the law, hauing a most ready will and pleasure to doe, whatsoeuer thinges thou shalt know to be acceptable vnto God, whether they be contemptible or noble, small or great, thou shalt count them alike. But first of all it shall be thy desire, that this blessed knowledge of God may be common also to the rest, whereupon by and by thy loue will here shew it selfe, and will assay all meanes, to make this truth of saluation manifest vnto all, it will publish and repete it, wheresoeuer it shall be able, reiecting and condemning whatsoeuer other either teach or say, that agreeth not with this truth. Whereby it will come to passe, that Satan & the worlde, which heare nothing so vnwillingly as this truth, & can not abide that their things should be condemned, wil

Satan & the world can not abide falshood to

rise

rise against thee with all their might, wil by & by trouble thee, all the great, learned, rich & mighty of the world wil condemne thee of heresie and madnes, and will leaue no meane vnattempted vntill if they be able they haue dispatcht thee of thy life. Thus with Christ thy Lord thou shalt be persecuted, & suffer extreme ignominie, thy body, life, goods, name, friendes, and all things being brought into perill, vntill they haue thrust thee from them out of this life into the eternal & blessed life: In the meane season thou must suffer all these things with a patient mind, and take them in good part, losing none of ỳ spiritual ioy, which thou hast of Christ in thy God, & for thy part shewing to thy persecutors all kindnes and loue, being alwayes mindful, that thou a litle before wast not much vnlike them before God. All which thinges thou shalt doe through faith & loue, albeit they exceede the strength of nature. And this in deede is a true Christian life, wherein thou doost endeuour to doe so to other, as God hath done to thee.

be reproued & the truth to be preached, & therfore they persecute them which preach the truth.

Not by the workes of righteousnes which we had done. In these words the Apostle signifieth that which we haue now sayd, and proueth it as it were by rendring a reason. For if the bountifulnes and loue of God to manward hath appeared, & he hath saued vs of his mercie, and not because of our owne righteousnes, yea we being by all meanes vnworthy, and subiect to innumerable sinnes, it is meete that we also do good to them that haue not deserued so much of vs, & are vnworthy therof. For we which are become the sonnes of God, must resemble God our father, and bestow benefits according to our abilitie as well vpon our enemies and persecutours, as vpon our friendes and them that do good vnto vs. Wherof Christ also hath admonished vs Matth. 5: Loue your enemies, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heauen, who maketh his sunne to shine vppon the good & euill, & sendeth raine on the iust & vniust. For if ye loue them which loue you, vvhat revvard shal ye haue? vvhen as euen the heathen & Publicans doe the same. Nowe the Apostle doth not onely expressely condemne vs for euill workes, but sayth: Not by the vvorks of righteousnes, or, which vve haue done in righteousnes. Where he also reiecteth those workes, which we counted righteous, and were thought both of vs & others to haue bin done in righteousnes, whē as they were so farre from being righteous, that they made vs more vnworthy of the grace of God, and

We must do well vnto men, yea euen though they haue not so deserued of vs.

more vnfit to receiue it, for they are deceitfull workes, whereunto we adde this sinne, that we thinke them righteous, and trust in them, whereby God is prouoked to anger more then can be said, euen as our enemies are wont to moue vs to anger, when as they will auouch those thinges to be iust, wherein they sinne and doe vnlustly. But euen as God, when we being vnwise, by errour moued him to anger, counting our sinnes workes of righteousnes, did not therefore reiect vs, but of his mercie deliuered vs from this errour and sinnes: so we neglecting the foolishnes and dotage of our aduersaries, whereby they contend that sinnes are to be counted for righteousnes, ought neuertheles of meere loue, hauing no respect of euill or good deserts, to be beneficiall vnto them, and endeuour to doe them good in all thinges, looking for frute of our benefits not of thē, but of God alone. Let these things suffize to haue bene spoken for a compendious and generall exposition of this text.

We ought to be beneficiall to others of meere loue, hauing no respect to good or euill deserts.

Nowe let vs also briefly wey the wordes, wherein he setteth forth and commendeth the grace of God. First he so greatly extolleth it, that in respect of it he condemneth all our good workes and righteousnes: neither doth he condemne a small thing, when he condemneth our righteousnes or righteous workes, the most excellent thinge that man can haue in earth. For if all men with all their might should labour and endeuour to attayne to most exact prudence, wisedom, and libertie of minde and will, which we reade that some Philosophers and Princes haue done, as Socrates, Traianus, and many other, whose fame the whole world hath long since spred abroade both by wordes and writinges: neuertheles all such wisedome, and all suche vertues are nothinge but sinnes before God, forasmuch as they be not done in and by the grace of God. Doers of such vertues are ignorant of God, and therefore they can not honour him by their studies and endeuours, they thinke they haue all thinkes of them selues, when as no man can haue any good thinge at all, but of this grace alone, which the Gospell preacheth. So Paule glorieth, that he, before he knewe Christ, liued a blameleſſe life, and was more zealous towarde the lawe then those of his age, that he also thought, that he did a thing acceptable to God by persecuting the Christians, which condemned that blameles life which he ledde, but afterwarde when he had learned Christ, he sayth,

The good workes and righteousnes of men how they are esteemed of.

that

that he coũteth that righteoulnes to be but dounge, that he might be found not in such righteoulnes, but in Christ by faith. Philip. 3. The same thing he witnesseth and entreateth of at large in the Epistles to the Galathians and Colossians. Here therefore is condemned all boasting of free will, mans strength, righteoulnes, and good workes, and it is concluded, that they are all nothing but sinnes, and certaine destruction, although they haue a fayre shew: that we are saued by the onely grace of God, as many of vs as beleeue, and call for it, with acknowledging of our owne vanitie and perdition.

Now we must accustome our selues to the Scripture, which maketh mention of two sorts of righteoulnes, one humane, which Paul here and in many other places hath mentioned, the other diuine, euen that grace of saluation, which iustifieth vs by faith, whereof he speaketh in the ende of this text: That being iustified by grace, we should be heires of eternall life. Here thou seest plainly that the grace of God is our true righteoulnes, whereby we are iustified, which is therfore called ỹ righteoulnes of God, for that it is giuen vnto vs of God, and is made ours, when we are made partakers thereof by faith. Of this he speaketh also Rom. 1: In the Gospell is reuealed the righteoulnes of God from faith to faith, as it is written: The iust shall liue by faith. And Gen. 15: Abraham beleeued, and it was counted to him for righteoulnes. Whereupon the Scripture concludeth, that no man is counted righteous before God, but he that beleeueth, as the Apostle testifieth, where he reciteth that saying of Abacuc: The iust shal liue by faith. So it appeareth that faith, grace, mercye, truth, righteoulnes, that all these are that same which God worketh in vs by Christ and the Gospell. Whereupon it is said Psal. 25: All the wayes of the Lord are mercie and truth. For those are the wayes of the Lord in which we obseruing his commaundements, do walke, and he againe in vs, now those wayes must be directed by his mercie and truth alone, not by our strength and industrie, forasmuch as our wayes being ordered hereby, are nothing but vanitie before God, and do deserue his wrath. According to that which the Lord sayth Esai 55: As farre as the heauen is higher then the earth, so farre do my waies exceede yours. As if he should say: Your righteoulnes is earthly and of no value, wherefore ye must bid it farewell and walke

Tow sortes of righteoulnes.

Diuine righteoulnes whereby we are iustified.

in myne, if ye hope for saluation.

But according to his mercie he saued vs. It is maruell how the credit of these wordes can stand, wherein the Apostle affirmeth that we are alreadie saued, although liuing yet in earth, and therefore in continuall miserie. But he did so speake, that he might more fully expresse the power of the diuine grace, and the nature of faith against hypocrites, who as though saluatiō were yet farre of, do in vaine endeuour to get and obtaine it by their workes. For Christ hath already saued vs: he hath performed all things which are required hereunto, that we may be saued: he hath ouercome and subdued synne, death, hell, &c. so that he hath left nothing, for any man to care for, he hath also giuen all these things vnto vs in Baptisme, that who soeuer beleueth in Christ, that he hath performed them, hath them together in the same moment, so that he hath neede of nothing more vnto saluation, but faith alone, that he may firmely beleeue that these things are so performed. But marke how incōparable riches of his grace God hath poured vpon vs in Baptisme, who hath deliuered vs euen from those workes, whereby those foolish holy ones go about to merit heauen, and to be saued. For we must haue heauen, and be saued before we can do any good workes, for that workes can not merit heauen, but heauen being before giuen of meere grace, causeth vs to do good workes, and that for no hope of merit or reward, but onely to the commoditie of our neighbours, and the glorie of God, vntill this bodie also be deliuered from sinne and death.

We are alreadie saued by Christ.

What the life of a Christiā is after baptisme.

Wherefore all the life of a Christian after Baptisme is nothing els, but an expectation of saluation and felicity to be reuealed, which they that beleeue in Christ do now possesse, although hidden. They haue all thinges nowe certainly, but they are yet hid in faith, which when as it is chaunged, knowledge being reuealed, all things as they now haue them, shall appeare, which shall come to passe, when pleasaunt and wished death commeth, according to that saying of Iohn: Dearely beloued, now are we the sonnes of God, and yet it doth not appeare what we shall be: But we know that when he shall appeare, we shalbe like him. And euerie man that hath this hope in him, purgeth himselfe, euen as he is pure. Wherefore suffer not thy selfe to be deceiued, and to be seduced from this truth by

1. Ioh. 3. 2.

those

those hypocrites, which contemning faith, do falsely affirme that saluation is farre from thee, and teach thee to endeuour in vaine to attaine vnto it by thy workes. It is in thy selfe, if thou beleeue that all things are perfourmed by Christ, euen as he himselfe witnesseth: The kingdome of God is within you, Luke 17. So that all our life after Baptisme ought to be nothing els but an expectation, that that should be reuealed which is already in vs, and that we may comprehend, as we are comprehended, as Paul sayth Philip. 3. I follow, if that I may comprehend that, for whose sake also I am comprehended of Christ, that is, that I may at length see those things which are giuen me, being as yet in the shut closet of faith. He coueteth, and burneth with desire to see the treasure which by faith he receiued both giuen and sealed in Baptisme. Whereupon he addeth in the same place: Our conuersation is in heauen, from whence also we looke for our Sauiour Iesus Christ, who shall chaunge our vile bodie, that it may be fashioned like vnto his glorious body. Herewith also agreeth that which he saith Gal. 4: Ye know God, and byandby he doth as it were correct that which he had sayd, Yea, sayth he, rather are ye knowen, both which are true, although not after the like sort: We are now knowen of God, so that he comprehendeth vs, and we in deede know God, but we do not yet comprehend, for that our knowledge is as yet hidden and closed vp in fayth. He sayth moreouer Rom. 8: We are saued by hope, that is, we are saued, although we yet see it not, for that which one seeth, he hopeth not for, but if we hope for those thinges which we see not, we do with patience abide for them. Christ confirmeth this Luke 12: Let your loines be gird about, and your lights burning, and ye your selues like vnto men that wait for their maister, when he will returne from the wedding, that when he commeth, and knocketh, they may open vnto him immediatly. In which words he onely biddeth them that be his to be ready to looke for him the bridegrome, as which are already saued being admitted into the number of his ministers. Hereunto also pertaineth that which the Apostle sayth Tit. 2: Let vs liue soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and appearing of the glorie of that mightie God, and of our Sauiour Iesus Christ. In these and such like places whereof thou maist reade many here and there in the

holy Scriptures, he witnesseth that we are already saued, and that it doth not behoue, that a Christian man should first seeke to attaine to saluation by his workes. This opinion and deuelish doctrine blyndeth the eyes of Christiãs, extinguisheth the knowledge of faith, and carieth men from the waye of truth and saluation. We must cleaue vnto that which the Apostle here saith: He hath saued vs according to his mercie, and that which he addeth in the ende of this text, that we are heires according to the hope of eternall life. We are now heires, but that is hidden in fayth, but we looke with a certaine hope, that hereafter it shalbe reuealed. And God will haue vs so to looke for the reuelation of this inheritance, and to liue a certaine time after Baptisme, that he may chastise our body by our ministery, and declare the power of his grace in fight against the flesh, the worlde and the deuil, but especially for this cause, that by vs he may helpe our neighbours, and both by doctrine, and also by our life which he liueth in vs, may bring them to the communion of fayth. And albeit he can do this by Angels, yet it pleaseth him rather that it should be done by vs men, that both the maner of fayth may be the better knowen, and that all things may be done sweetely and louingly. For if Angels should alwayes haue to do with vs, there should not be so much fayth, neither should it be so pleasaunt, as when we are taught and guided by them that are partakers of our nature, whom we do better know, and with whom we do more familiarly associat our selues. And so, that there may be some, by whom other also may be conuerted both by doctrine, and good examples, it is not meete that we should byandby after Baptisme be taken into heauen, wherein notwithstanding we are already admitted citizens.

Why God will haue vs to looke for the reuelatiõ of our inheritaunce a certain time.

Hereupon if one weye all things rightly, it can not be douted, that it is a practize and miracle of Satan and Antichrist, that so much is spent for Purgatories sake, such faith as this being put quite out of mens myndes. For men are taught by their workes to saue themselues from Purgatorie, or at the least to deliuer themselues out from thence, as though saluation were not yet giuen vs, and it were necessarie to come vnto it by other meanes then by faith alone, which howe it disagreeth with the Scripture and a Christian life, there is no man that doth not see, but he that seeth nothing in the Scripture. For thus the holy

A practize of Satan & Antichrist to delude mẽ with Purgatory.

holy Scriptures do teach euerie where, that who soeuer doth not receiue saluation by meere grace, through fayth before all workes, he shall neuer be partaker thereof. And that who soeuer referre their good workes, not to the profite of their neighbours, but to their owne commoditie, being more carefull of their owne saluation then of their neighbours, haue no good workes at all. All the workes of these are voide of fayth, and infected with pernitious errour. It had bin greatly to be wished that Purgatorie had neuer bin inuented, and neuer mention made thereof in the pulpit, for it hath bin cause of such hinderance to Christian veritie and syncere truth, as can not be recouered. For we see it now brought to passe by the meanes of Satan, that almost al prayers are directed to onely Purgatorie, with this vngodly and pestilent opinion, whereby miserable men thinke that they shalbe redeemed from thence, and obtaine saluation by the workes of men. Whereby the riches of Baptisme and fayth are had in no reputatiõ, and they at the last of Christians become Heathen. O most pernitious abomination. Christians should be taught as Christ and Paul teach them, that after Baptisme and absolution from synnes they should so liue, that they should be ready euery houre to receiue death, with desire looking for the reuelation of saluation already receiued. Now by the opinion of Purgatorie they are made secure and slothfull, so that they differre the study of godlines euen to their death, and thinke by contrition and confession they shall amend all things, as though there were some synnes remaining for which they must go into Purgatorie, they hope that by Masses for the departed, and other bequests that they are persuaded to make in their testamẽts or last willes, they shalbe redeemed out of purgatorie, but these miserable men are in these things vtterly deceiued, and shall at length trie them to be farre otherwise.

By the washing of the new birth. He setteth forth the grace of God giuen to vs in Baptisme, with wordes verie full of praise and commendation. He calleth Baptisme a washing, whereby not the feete and handes, but the whole man is at once washed, purified and saued, so that to the summe and inheritaunce of saluation there is neede of nothing but onely fayth in this grace of God, that it may remaine and be acknowledged the worke of grace alone, that we are saued without all our workes and me-

rits, and so also there may remaine in vs pure loue, praise, giuing of thankes, and glorie of the diuine mercie, without all glorie and pleasing of our selues in our owne strength and endeuour, as it hath bin already sayd often and at large. Humane righteousnes is also a washing, but not whereby the whole man is so washed, but that Pharisaicall washing, whereby onely the apparell and vessells which are outward, are made cleane, whereof it is spoken Matth. 23. Whereby it commeth to passe that men seeme vnto themselues pure, but inwardly neuertheles they remaine ful of filthines. Therefore he called Baptisme not a corporall or outward washing, but the washing of regeneration or new birth, by which not those thinges that are outward, are washed, and onely the outward man made cleane, but the whole nature of man is altered and changed into an other nature, that is, the carnall natiuitie is thereby destroyed, with all the inheritaunce of synnes and perdition. Whereby he againe witnesseth, that our saluation is giuen vs at once, so that it is not to be gotten by workes. For not one or two members are wont to be borne, as the handes or feete, but the whole man, which can not worke this that he may be borne a man, but is first borne that he may worke: Likewise our workes do not purifie or saue vs, but when as before we are pure, iustified, and saued, we worke freely those things, which may be profit to our neighbour, and honour to God. And this is the simple and pure knowledge of the diuine grace, whereby a man learneth to know both God and himselfe: to praise God alone, to humble and cast downe himselfe: to trust in God, to despeire of himselfe. This doctrine of saluation they marueilously hinder, which vrge men with lawes, precepts, and workes, and teach them to seeke thereby to be saued.

Baptisme what maner of washing it is.

Saluation cõmeth not by workes.

And the renewing. That this washing and new birth may be more fully vnderstood, he hath added, the renewing, that thou maiest vnderstand, that he that is truly baptized, is become a new man, and a new creature, endued with a new disposition, which now is farre otherwise affected, loueth, liueth, speaketh and doth farre otherwise, thẽ he was wont or could before. So the Apostle sayth, Gal. 6: In Christ neither circumcision auaileth any thing, nor vncircumcision, that is, no workes of the Lawe are of any value or importaunce, but a new creature. As if he should say: Saluatiõ can not be perfected by ioyning together certaine good

He that is truely baptized is become a new creature.

workes,

wozkes, but the whole man must be at once renewed, and his nature chaũged, whereupon true good wozkes will follow of themselues, not by peecemeale, but togither with great plentie. Of this new birth, whereby the whole man is renewed, Christ speaketh Joh. 3: He that is not borne againe, can not see the kingdome of God. Here againe it manifestly appeareth, that nothing is here done by our wozkes, but that it behoueth, that man, how great soeuer he be, must die, and be chaunged into an other, which is done in Baptisme, if we beleeue. The condemned also shalbe borne againe in the last day, but they shal not be renewed, they shall remaine vncleane, as they were here, and as they were borne of Adam. Therefore that he might speake rightly of Baptisme, he calleth it the washing of the new birth, whereby they that are borne againe are also renewed. Of this new birth many things are to be found here and there in the Scripture, because of which also God calleth his word and Gospell a wombe and matrix, as Esai 46: Hearken all ye that remaine of the house of Israell, whom I haue borne in my wombe, as mothers are wont to speake of their children. He therefore that beleeueth the Gospell, is as it were conceiued in the wombe of God, & from thence borne a new man, and like vnto God: Whereof we will in an other place speake more. Now it shalbe sufficient, to haue learned by these words, how our wozkes are nothing in fulfilling the cõmaundements of God, and that it is a mad thinge to attribute here neuer so litle to our owne strength, seeing that it is fayth alone, whereby man is at once borne againe, & renewed. Wherefore vnderstand this, that good wozkes must folow a new creature, but to attaine vnto righteousnes, & that new creature they are able to helpe nothing at all.

The cõdemned shalbe borne again, but not renewed.

No otherwise is the grace of God wont to renew man, then as if God should turne some dzie and withered blocke into a new, greene, and flozishing tree, which may afterward bzinge forth frute plentifully. For the grace of God is a great, strong, verie mightie, and meruelous effectual thing, it lyeth not in the minde, as the Schoolemen dzeamed: it sleepeth not, oz is borne, as a painted table beareth a picture: it selfe beareth, guideth, dzageth, dzaweth, chaungeth, and wozketh all thinges in men, so, that euerie one may feele and haue experience of it. It selfe in deede is hyd, but the wozkes of it can not be hyd, but do witnes of it, as

How the grace of God reneweth man.

The grace of God exceeding effectual and mighty in operation.

the leaues and frutes do of the tree, of what nature it is. Wherefore the Scholemen Thomas and Scotus do vngodlily detract from it, who attribute no more vnto it, then that it doth adorne the workes of nature, and is a helpe that they be brought to perfection. For it doth not adorne or helpe onely, but it alone worketh those thinges that be good, neither doth it worke them onely, but doth rather chaunge and renew the person. For it exhibiteth the washing of the new birth, and of renewing, not of workes onely, but much rather of the whole man. He that shall preach these things of grace, shall truly and fully commend it. Which Paul endeuoured to do when he said: He hath saued vs by the washing of the new birth, and renewing of the holy Ghost. Nothing can be done here by ioyning of workes togither, the nature must needes be chaunged, whereupon it cõmeth to passe, that they that truely beleeue must suffer many thinges: for grace worketh in them, & declareth it selfe present. Hereunto pertaineth that saying of the 111. Psal. The workes of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that haue pleasure therein. What are these workes? We are they, by grace in Baptisme made the great, new, and regenerate workes of God. Is it not a great thinge for a man byandby to be saued, and deliuered from synnes, death, and hell? therefore he sayth: sought out of all them that haue pleasure therein. For by this new birth God hath found out, and done what soeuer men can desire. For what els do men couet and desire, but to obtaine saluation, to be deliuered from synne, death, and hell?

Of the holy Ghost. Lastly, that he may the more expresse the greatnes and vertue of grace, he attributeth this washing of the new birth, and renewing, to the holy Ghost. For this washing is so great, and of so weightie importaunce, that no creature but the holy Ghost alone is able to perfourme it. But how much, most excellent Paul, doost thou condemne free will, the great good workes of the proud holy ones, that is, the merits of hypocrites? In how hie a place doost thou set our saluation, and again, how doost thou bring it downe to vs, and placest it neere vs, yea euen within vs? how purely & syncerely doost thou set forth grace in these wordes? Wherefore worke what soeuer and how much soeuer thou wilt, it is vnpossible for a man to be renewed, and the person chaunged (without which no workes acceptable to God

Onely the washing of ỹ newe birth & renewing

can

can be done) but by the washing of the newe birth, and the renewing of the holy Ghost. That we may plainly see in those hypocriticall counterfaitours of workes. For thou shalt synde none harder, none prouder, none so rash and hastie spirits. For they are broken, and not renewed, indurate, obstinate, confirmed by continuance, couering in deede and some what adorning that old Adam by those their counterfaite good workes, but in the meane season there doth not any whit appeare any chaunge of nature in them, they continue still in the olnes of their corrupt flesh. O, what a pestilent people is this, and in how great indignation of God are they, when as in the meane tyme they thinke that they sit in Gods lappe. Nowe whereas the Apostle attributeth this washing of the newe birth, and renewing to the holy Ghost, he sayth the same which Christ doth Iohn 3, where he sayth: Except a man be borne againe of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdome of God. For that which Christ signified by water, the Apostle calleth the washing, so both made mention of newe birth and of the holy Ghost. And we must marke that that which is spoken here of the holy Ghost both by Christ, and the Apostle, must not be referred to that Papisticall confirmation, as they call it, for both of them referred to Baptisme that which is here mentioned concerning the holy Ghost, who when the body is washed with water, doth himselfe worke the newe birth, and renewing by faith, which Christ called, to be borne againe of the spirit. We read in the Actes of the Apostles, that the Apostles did eftsoones lay their handes on them that were baptised, and that so the holy Ghost came vpon them by a visible signe, which the Papistes also snatch to their confirmation. But as that was done, that the beleeuers might by a visible signe be endued with the holy Ghost, to preach the Gospell in diuers languages, so it continued onely the time thereof, vntill the doctrine of the Gospell was commended to the worlde by sufficient signes, wherefore it is nowe long since worne out of vse: but that a certaine ceremonie hath come from thence euen vnto vs, of laying handes on them, which are ordained Ministers or Preachers, which is nowe brought into an vngodly and pernitious vse: but of these thinges in an other place.

Washing of the new birth and renewing attributed to the holy Ghost.

VVhich he shed on vs aboundantly. See how notably the Apostle setteth forth grace. He sayth not that the holy Ghost was giuen, but shed, and not that onely, but shed aboundantly. For he can not sufficiently extoll and magnifie grace, and the worke thereof, and we, alas, count it so vile in respect of our workes. It were a dishonour to God and to his holy Spirit, if when he hath plentifully shed it vpon vs, there should as yet be some thing wanting, necessarie to righteousnes and saluation, which we are able to perfourme, as though the workes of so incomparable grace could not be sufficient. And Paul surely might be reproued of lying, which had not spoken all thinges whereby we must be iustified and saued, when he affirmeth that he doth it. But as he writeth, so it is: no man can attribute so great thinges to this washing and regeneration, no man can so much presume of them, but greater thinges may be attributed vnto them, and thou oughtest to promise to thy selfe moe thinges of them: no man shall beleeue so great thinges, but he shall receiue greater. Forasmuch as those good thinges which God hath giuen, are so great and so vnspeakeable, he would haue them here come vnto vs being included and hyd in his words and sayth. For the nature of our present life can not beare them being manifest, and therefore it must perish, when they beginne to be reuealed, that man maye by these inestimable riches, which he nowe possesseth by sayth, be as it were swallowed vp, and banish awaye. We are already aboundantly iustified by sayth without all our owne merit, therefore Christ sayth, Joh. 3: God so loued the world, that he hath giuen his only begotten Sonne, that who soeuer beleeueth in him, should not perish, but haue euerlasting life. Behold, they that beleeue, haue already euerlasting life, and therefore vndoutedly are iustified and holy without all their owne labour or meanes: that thou maiest see, that nothing but grace and mercie is plentifully powred vpon vs, and that our workes could auaile nothing hereunto.

The workes of the diuine grace sufficiēt for our saluation without any addition of our owne workes.

Thou wilt perhaps say: Thou canst not preach sufficiently, that the grace and mercie of God doth worke all things in vs, and that no respect is to be had of our workes, to the attaining of saluation, but how commeth it to passe then, that the Scripture so oftē witnesseth that they shalbe saued which haue wrought good

An obiectiō.

good wozkes? As Iohn. 5: They shall come forth, that haue done good, vnto the resurrection of life, but they that haue done euell vnto the resurrection of condemnation. And Rom. 2: Honour and glorie to them that do well, wrath and indignation to them that do ill. We read many sentences here and there in the Scripture like vnto these. I aunswere: As the wozdes sound, so take them without all glosse, foz it is euen so, they that do well shalbe saued, they which do otherwise, shalbe condemned. But herein many erre from the truth of the Scripture, in that they iudge wozkes accozding the outward appearance, contrarie to the Scripture, which teacheth that no man can do good, whoe is not himselfe good befoze, and by wozkes no man can become good, but wozkes take their goodnes of the wozker, and he becommeth good by the washing of the new birth, and by nothing els. This Christ meant Matth. 7. saying: A corrupt tree can not bring forth good frute, neither a good tree euell frute. Wherefoze make the tree either good oz euell, and it will bring foyth like frutes. Hypocrites oftentimes do wozkes like to the wozkes of the Godly, yea sometime hauing a goodlier shewe, foz they diligently pzaye, fast, giue almes, and pzetend a meruelous holines, but Christ calleth these sheepes clothing, wherewith most hurtfull wolues are clothed and hidden. Foz none of them is of a true humble, meeke, and bountifull heart, which they chiefely declare when they are rebuked, when their holines is repzoued: foz then bzing they foyth their naturall frutes, whereby they are knowen. Those are, rashe iudgementes, impatiencie, stubburnnes, obstinacie, slaundering, and such like. It is true therefoze, he that doth well, shalbe saued, that is, his saluation shalbe manifest, but he can doe no good at all, if he be not befoze regenerate by the washing of the newe birth. Foz what good wozkes can one wozke in the oldenes of the flesh, and by the strength pzoceeded from Adam, they are the good wozkes which Paule here condemneth, saying: Not by the workes of righteousnes which we had done. They are in deede good wozkes done in righteousnes, but not befoze God, who first hath respect to the person, & then to the wozkes, as we read Gen. 4. that he had respect first to Abel, then to his sacrifice, as he first turneth himselfe from Cain, and then from his sacrifice, although accozding to the outward appea-

The answere.

Works must not be iudged good according to the outward appearance.

raunce it was as good a sacrifice and worke, as the sacrifice of Abel.

Through Iesus Christ our Sauiour. This he added that he may keepe vs vnder the winges of Christ, as chickens are wont to be preserued vnder the winges of the hen: for thus Christ sayth Matth. 23: Ierusalem, Ierusalem, how often would I haue gathered thy children togither, as the hen gathereth her chickens vnder her winges, and ye would not? And hereby the nature of a true and right faith is taught. For it is nothing which some say: I beleeue in God almightie, as the Iewes and many other are wont, and do therefore receiue corporall benefites of God.

What a true & liuely faith beleeueth.

It is a true and liuely faith, whereby thou beleeuest in God, howbeit by Iesus Christ. First that thou dout not that God is become a merciful father vnto thee, which hath pardoned all thy sinnes, & in Baptisme hath adopted thee for his sonne and heire, that thou maiest certainly know that thou art saued. Againe, thou must also knowe this, that that was not done freely, neither without satisfaction made to the diuine iustice. For there can be no place in thee for the diuine grace and mercy to worke saluation, and to giue thee eternall good thinges, vnlesse the iustice of God be before most fully satisfied. For Christ witnesseth Matth. 5: One iote, or one title of the Lawe shall not scape, till all thinges be fulfilled. That which is spoken of the grace and goodnes of God, can not come but to them which do most purely and exactly obserue his commaundements, according to that saying Mich. 2: When as the Iewes did presume of the goodnes of God toward them, and did alwayes promise vnto them selues peace, saying: How can God be alwayes angrie, is the spirit of the Lord shortened? It is aunswered them: Are not my workes good vnto him that walketh vprightly? Wherefore it shalbe lawfull for none to attaine vnto the aboundance of grace, vnles he hath before most exactly satisfied the commaundemēts of God.

Though we coulde and should fulfill the commaūdementes of God, yet should we merit nothīg of him.

Now it hath bin spoken at large, that our workes are nothing before God, whereby we can not fulfill so much as the least commaundement of God, how much lesse shall we be able so to satisfie the iustice of God, that we may become worthie of his grace? Moreouer, if we were able to fulfill all the commaundements of God, and in all thinges to satisfie his iustice, notwithstanding we had not as yet deserued grace and saluation, neither should

should he therefore owe it vnto vs, for that he may by the right of creation require as due seruice, all those things of vs his creatures, created to liue vnto him. Wherefore it should yet come of grace and mercie, what soeuer should come from him to vs. This Christ declared verie well Luke 17. speaking in a parable: VVhich of you hauing a seruaunt plowing or feeding cattell, would saye vnto him byandby, when he were come from the field: Go, and sit downe at the table? and would not rather say to him, dresse wherewith I may suppe, and girde thy selfe, and serue me, till I haue eaten and dronken, and afterward eat thou and drinke thou? Doeth he thanke that seruaunt, because he did that which was commaunded vnto him? I trowe not. So likewise ye, when ye haue done all those things which are commaunded you, say, VVe are vnprofitable seruaunts: we haue done that which was our dutie to do.

Seing then that heauen is giuen of grace, and for no merit, euē vnto those, if there were any such, which haue done all things that were commaunded them, according to that promise: If thou wilt enter into life, keepe the commaundements: what shall we boast of our good workes, which although they were most absolute, yet should they be vnworthie of heauen, but inasmuch as it is giuen vs by the free and mercifull promise? Hereupon (for that we must so satisfie the diuine iustice, and yet notwithstanding our workes are not able to attaine thereunto, whereunto if they should attaine, yet should they deserue no grace or saluatiō, for that they are before due) God first gaue vnto vs a man, which should satisfie the diuine iustice for vs in all thinges. Againe, he hath by the same man bestowed this grace and bountifulnes vpon vs, that albeit we without our owne merit and worthines, yea hauing euel deserued and being vnworthie, do receiue grace, yet it commeth not vnto vs altogither freely and without all merit, for we haue it through the merit and satisfaction of Christ. Whereupon Paul sayth Rom. 5: As by the offence of one sinne came on all men to condemnation: so by the iustifying of one, that is, of Iesus Christ, the benefite aboūded toward all men to the iustification of life. That is: As without all our merit, and owne worke we fell into synne, being borne synners, so againe without all our merit and meanes, we are redeemed from sinnes, by the washing of the spirit borne againe the sonnes of God, par-

We had need of one who should satisfie the diuine iustice for vs.

Not by our owen merit, but by ỹ merit of Christ are we saued.

takers of grace and saluation. And this is the cause why the Apostle where he speaketh of faith and grace, is wont to adde, by Iesus Christ: whereby surely he would giue vs to vnderstand, that none should count it sufficient, if he say: I beleeue in God, Christ being neglected. He that truly beleeueth, must acknowledge, that his faith can not be acceptable to God, yea that it can be no faith at all, if all the commaundements of God be not before fulfilled, which seeing it is aboue thy abilitie, (and if it were not, yet notwithstanding thou hadst performed nothing, but that thou oughtest, and hadst as yet merited nothing, hauing fulfilled euen all the commaundements of God) thou hast neede of an other, which in all thinges may satisfie the diuine iustice for thee, and may also merit heauen for thee. Now this other is our Lord and Sauiour Iesus Christ, who hath for thee fulfilled the whole Lawe, and merited for thee, that God now according to his iustice can not but giue heauen vnto thee, and in all thinges acknowledge thee for his sonne and heire. And this is a true and sound faith, which trusteth in God by Christ, and is certaine that by his merit it hath already receiued of God saluation, which shortly after shalbe reuealed with blessed aboundance of felicitie.

Christian faith.

Neither can any other be called Christian faith, but that, whereby it is beleeued, that by Christ do come vnto vs both satisfaction, which we owe to the iustice of God, and the gift of saluation, which we our selues by no meanes, if the Lawe could euen be fulfilled of vs, can merit. Whereupon Paul Rom. 4. sayth: Christ was deliuered to death for our synnes, and rose againe for our iustification. That is, by Christ we haue receiued, not onely remission of synnes, but moreouer also, that before God we are accounted righteous, & the sonnes of his grace. To the same effect also tendeth that which he sayth Rom. 3: Whom God hath set forth to be a reconciliation through faith in his blood. Where againe we learne, that it is true faith, which trusteth in the blood of Christ, and beleeueth that thereby it shall obtaine grace. Whereas thou beleeuest that he hath shed his blood for thee, thou receiuest satisfaction: in that thou acknowledgest him the reconciliation, thou confessest that by his merit the diuine grace and saluation do come vnto thee. We haue all things without our owne merit and meanes, but not without the merit

We haue all things necessary to saluation, not by any merit of our owen, but by the merit and meanes of Iesus Christ.

merit and meanes of Christ, who hath for this cause shed his blood. Wherefore that we may allude vnto ỹ parable of Christ, we must containe our selues vnder his winges, and not vpon trust in our selues flie out, and contend to come vnto God, otherwise we shalbe a praye to the hellish kite. For as it hath bin oftē sayd, our righteousnes, our merits, yea and our faith shall preuaile nothing, without this our mediatour Christ. And therefore he sayth Ioh. 14: No man cōmeth vnto the Father, but by me. And in the whole Gospell what other thing doth he, but endeuour to take vs out of our selues, and to transferre vs to himselfe vnder his winges, that we may trust onely in his satisfaction and merit? The same the Apostle also teacheth in the wordes following.

That we being iustified by his grace, should be made heires according to the hope of eternall life. He sayth that we are iustified, not by our owne workes, but by the grace of the same Iesus Christ. That is, we are therefore iustified, for that Christ hath the grace of the Father, hauing fulfilled his will in all thinges, and thereby merited eternall life. For seeing that he hath no neede of this merit, he giueth it vnto vs which beleeue in him, that before God all his thinges may be imputed to vs, and by them we may receiue saluation. See, how rich a thing sound faith is, and how great good things it bringeth with it. See also how precious a thing the Gospell is, and how great a treasure it is to haue it purely preached: and contrariwise, how great a discommoditie there is, where it is not preached, or not rightly preached, the inuentions of men being mingled with it, or thrust in stede of it. Take heede therefore of such deceiuers, and of their counterfet faith, rest not in thy selfe, but get thee vnder ỹ winges of Christ, keepe thy selfe vnder his protection, trust that thou art heire of eternall life, not by thy owne righteousnes, or grace which thou hast receiued, but whereby he is righteous and acceptable before God. Hereunto pertaineth this saying Psal. 91. He will couer thee vnder his winges, and thou shalt be safe vnder his fethers. And in the Songe of Salomon it is said: My spouse is a doue, building her neast in the caues of the rockes, and in the holes of the wall, that is, in the woundes of Christ. And this in deede is a true Christian faith, which resteth not in it selfe as the Scholemen dreamed, but reposeth it selfe wholy in

We are iustified by the grace of Christ Iesus.

Christ, and as it trusteth in him, so it resteth in him, having receiued eternall saluation. Whereas he saith that we are made heires of eternall life according to hope, beside that he proueth, that we without all our owne merits, by onely hope of grace are borne againe heires of eternall life, and do not become heires by working, whereof we haue already spoken at large, he also teacheth this, that our saluation and eternall life is as yet hid, although, if we beleeue, we do verely possesse it, and this body being put of, and the kingdome of Christ reuealed, all thinges shall appeare manifestly.

The weapons of this text.

Our owne righteousnes and good workes are of no power to saue vs.

This text fighteth most mightily, and with most plaine words against all righteousnes and good workes of mans reason and free will. For the wordes are plaine. Not by the workes of righteousnes, which we had done, but according to his mercie he saued vs, by the washing, &c. All which wordes do vtterly ouerthrow our righteousnes, attributing all things to ỹ washing of the newe birth, and the renewing of the holy Ghost, to Christ and his grace. How can there notwithstanding any presumption as yet remaine in vs? Wherefore let all sacred and prophane lawes haue a fayre shew: let all sacrificing priests, monkes, and nunnes boast of themselues: let all religious and honest men and women seeme goodly in outward appearaunce: let them euen rayse the dead: if faith in Christ be absent, whereof we haue now spoken so much, all these things are to no purpose. These most false shewes do as yet deceiue the whole world, and seduce almost euerie one. They make the Gospell obscure, and extinguish the faith of Christ: All their workes and orders, although they appeare goodly, and they thinke them to haue merited neuer so much, do auaile no more vnto saluation, then the workes of beastes, or of artificers, whereby they do maintaine themselues and theirs, yea they do most hurtfully hinder it. Therefore that I may conclude, take heede as much as thou art able, of these wolues, which vnder a faire pretence counterfet themselues sheepe, and learne and accustome thy selfe with a sound faith to cleaue vnto Christ alone.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

FOrasmuch as there is often mention made in the new Testament of these wordes, the kingdom of heauē, the kingdom of God, ỹ kingdom of Christ, and it is very profitable and expedient for a Christian to know these, to wit, that they are nothing els, but remission of sinnes, and grace preached and offered by the Gospell. For in this kingdom thou shalt finde nothing but grace and goodnes, pardon and forgiuenes of sinnes, loue and gentlenes: I therefore thinke it good to entreate somewhat at large of the state of this kingdom, and of forgiuenes of sinnes. The kingdom of God, whereby he reigneth ouer all the faithfull, and as a faithfull king defendeth, punisheth, rewardeth, guideth, and directeth them, &c. they againe from their hart trust in him, suffer his fatherly chastisement and correction with a patient mind, and alwayes serue him through obedience, is not worldly or temporal, but spiritual. Neither consisteth it in meate and drinke, or in any outward thing, but onely in iustification, quieting and consolation of the hart and conscience of man. Wherfore it is nothing els, but forgiuenes and taking away of sinnes, by which consciences are defiled, troubled, and disquieted. For euen as a worldly and temporall kingdom is ordayned to this ende, that men may liue quietly & peaceably one with an other: So the kingdom of God giueth these thinges spiritually, and destroyeth the kingdom of sinne, and is nothing else, but an abolishing and pardoning of offences. God reigneth in the hartes, inasmuch as he worketh in them by his word, peace quietnes and consolation: euen as sinne worketh the contrary, namely, vnquietnes, anguish, and all kinde of euills. Herein God sheweth his maiestie and grace in this life, that he taketh away and pardoneth mens sinnes: and this is the kingdome of grace. Nowe when as sinne with his gard, that is Satan, death, and hell, shall trouble man no more, then at the last

The kingdō of God wher in it consisteth.

A similitude.

the kingdom of glory, and absolute felicitie shall be.

The kingdō of God is gouerned, not by the law, but by the Gospell.

Hereupon it followeth: first, that the kingdom of God is ruled or gouerned by no law, no not by the law of God, much lesse by the lawes of men, but onely by the Gospell, and faith in God, by which harts are purified, comforted, and quieted, whiles that the holy Ghost poureth loue and the knowledge of God into them, & maketh man as it were one thinge and one spirit with God: so that his affection is set vpon the same thinge, he willeth and desireth the same thinge, he seeketh and loueth the same thinge, that God doth. Neither standeth the case otherwise here, then it doth betweene two frendes, which beare good wil one to an other, and agree one with an other in all thinges. Hereof it commeth, that a man in this kingdome of God is perfect, mercifull, pitifull and bountifull toward his neighbour, seeing that he knoweth by the instinct of the holy Ghost, that God is of ꝑ same affection toward him, and toward all men, and doth poure forth his goodnes plentifully. Such affection of God no man can know by the lawe, but onely by the spirit, and word of the Gospell. None therefore shal obtaine quietnes, comfort, and peace of the hart, or attaine vnto the kingdom of God by any law. And they which prescribe many lawes, doe withdraw men from the kingdom of God, to the kingdom of sinne, wherein is nothing els, but vnquietnes, anguish, affliction, aduersitie, and all kind of euills tormenting the conscience. Like as on the contrary, in the kingdom and knowledge of God, there is meere ioy, peace, and consolation of harts.

How Christ reigneth in the kingdō of God.

Secondly: In this kingdom of God the Lord Christ reigneth no otherwise, then as a Maister of an Hospitall among the sicke, poore, and diseased. For vnto this kingdome none pertaine, but sinnefull and miserable men, vnto whome their sinnes are forgiuen. Hereupon Christ sayth in the Gospell Luke 6: VVo be to you that are riche, which haue receiued your consolation. But contrariwise, the poore, miserable, and succourles receiue comfort and ioy by the Gospel: for Christ came to call sinners onely, and not the righteous, that all glory may be referred to God alone, for that he forgiueth sinnes of his grace and meere mercy.

Christ putteth away sinne after two sortes.

Such abolishing or putting away of sinne, wherein Christ reigneth as King of the kingdome of God, is done of him after two sortes: first thus, in that he remitteth, pardoneth and couereth sinnes, so that God will not regard, remember or reuenge them although

although they be in a man. As it is in the 32 Psalme: Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiuen, and whose sinnes are couered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord wil not impute sinne, in whose spirit there is no guile. And in Esay cap. 43 God sayth: I am, euen I am he, that for myne owne selfs sake do away thine offences, and forget thy sinnes, so that I vvill neuer thinke vpon them. Secondely thus, in that he purgeth or rather scoureth sinnes by diuers crosses and afflictions. For they are two things, to remit sinnes, and to weaken the body of sinne that it may not reigne in vs. If a man beleeue, and is baptized, then all his sinnes are forgiuen him. But afterwarde sinne must be scoured or abated by manifold affliction and mortification, as long as he shall liue. Sinne sticketh in vs, as long as the mortal body remaineth, but for Christes sake it is not imputed in the wrath of God, but freely remitted, and the force thereof diminished by his fatherly chastisement. In such chastisement for their amendement, true Christians haue had great comfort, peace, and ioye, as Paule sayth Rom. 5: Then being iustified by faith, vve haue peace toward God, through our Lord Iesus Christ, by vvhō also through faith, vve haue had this accesse into this grace, wherin we stand, and reioyce vnder the hope of the glory of God. Neither that onely, but also vve reioyce in tribulations, knowving that tribulation bringeth forth patience, and patience experience, & experience hope. And hope maketh not ashamed, because the loue of God is shed abroad in our harts by the holy Ghost vvhich is giuen vnto vs. So thou hast two thinges to be considered: The first, that in this kingdom of God we are iustified. The seconde, that by tribulation and affliction we are glorified, without which we can not attaine vnto glory.

True Christians reioyce in affliction.

Thirdly, good Christians are not knowen by this, when any suffer manifold tribulation & chastisement, that the body of sinne may be weakened, and they brought to amendement. For herein they doe altogither differ amonge them selues, one suffereth this, an other that: one is chastised thus, an other otherwise, so that euen the very Apostles did not loue and suffer alike: But they are knowen in forgiuenes of sinnes, or iustification by faith, wherein God turneth his anger from them, & receiueth them vnto grace, and counteth them for his deare children, and imputeth no sinne to them vnto condemnation. Herein are all alike, euen as all

liue vnder one heauen. Wherefore they doe most grossely erre & stumble, which measure Christians by maners, workes, and the outwarde maner of liuing, euen as the Pharisees were wont to doe, and did therefore finde fault with Christ, for that he did not obserue their ceremonies, but was a frend of Publicanes and sinners. As that Pharise sayd within him selfe Luke 7: If this man were a Prophet, he would surely haue knowne who, and what maner of woman this is, which toucheth him: for she is a sinner. Heare nowe an example of those thinges which are before sayd: A Philitian which goeth about to cure the sicke, doth first promise him health by the assistance and helpe of God, whereby he putteth him in great hope and comfort. Afterward he beginneth to purge, to clense and strengthen, and such like thinges, which make to the recouering of health: So God also, when he hath remitted sinnes, and receiued man into the bosom of grace, doth lay on him all kind of afflictions, and doth scoure him, and renue him from day to day, in the knowledge and loue of God, vntil he become safe, pure and renued, which then at the last commeth to passe, when this mortall body dyeth.

A similitude

Fourthly in these two partitions of the kingdom of God, two sortes of men are founde, which abuse the same kingdome of the grace of God, and the Gospell. Some become sluggish and slothfull, saying: Well, if sinnes be pardoned freely of meere grace, and be washed away in baptisme, there is no neede that I should adde any thinge of mine owne. Other thinke contrariwise, that they shal put away their sinnes by workes, and so trusting to their owne merits, they are proud and arrogant, and in respect of them selues contemne other, which doe not so. The first of these contemne Gods grace: the other oppugne it, as not sufficient, and so they represent swine and dogges. Now all this appeareth by the Gospell, by which Christ reigneth in the kingdom of God. For some abuse it vnto carnall libertie: other contrariwise are perswaded, that it is not sufficient to saluation, but that their workes also doe helpe somewhat, and by this they deny and contemne the grace of God. Hereof thou mayst read more in the Epistle to the Romanes, wherein these two sortes of men are plainly set forth.

Two sortes of men abuse the kingdom of grace.

Fiftly, this kingdom of God, or remission of sinnes hath no bounde or measure, as that place of the Gospell doth very well shew, where Peter asketh the Lord: Lord, how oft shal my brother

Matth. 18. 21. 22.

ther sinne against me, and I shall forgiue him? vnto seuen times? Iesus sayd vnto him, I say not to thee, vnto seuen times, but vnto seuenty times seuen times, that is, as often as shall be needefull. After this followeth a parable, which the Lorde there putteth forth, wherein he most louerely admonisheth vs, if we will not fal out of the fauour of God, that we forgiue our neighbour his offences without all delay or grudging. Forasmuch as God alwayes forgiueth vs innumerable sinnes. Our dette, whereby we are bound vnto God, is ten thousand talents, that is, so vnmeasurable and great, that we are not able to pay it with all our substance, all our strength and workes. For we can put away no one sinne, although it be euen very litle. Seeing therefore that God doth remit so many sinnes of his grace in his kingdome, it is meete, that we should forgiue our neighbour a few offences. Of this kingdom of God, wherein sinnes are forgiuen, the Scripture euery where maketh mention, and sayth, that the kingdom & dominion of Christ doth extend from one ende of the lande to the other. So sayth Dauid Psal. 72: His dominion shall be from the one sea to the other, and from the fludde vnto the ende of the earth. And a litle after he sayth: All nations shall serue him. This also the Angell Gabriell declared to the Virgine Marie Luke 1. where he sayth thus of Christ: The Lord shall giue vnto him the throne of his father Dauid, and he shall reigne ouer the house of Iacob for euer, and of his kingdom shall be no end. These and such like places do shew that the forgiuenes of sinnes, wherin the kingdom of God doth especially consist, hath no measure or bound.

We must forgiue our neighbour, if we will haue God to forgiue vs.

Sixtly, hereof we may see, how vnchristianly they doe, which bringe forgiuenes of sinnes to a certaine measure, as they doe, which measure out their indulgences for prescribed yeares, with forgiuenes of the third, fourth, or halfe part. For hereby they bringe the kingdom of God into a narrow and straite roome, and are iniurious to his mercy, forasmuch as there is no ende of his kingdom, nor measure of his mercy. But whosoeuer shal in faith call vpon the name of God, shall be saued, as often as he doth it. Moreouer, when the sinner shall be sory for his sinnes, the Lorde will no more remember them, as it is in the Prophecie of Ezechiel, chap. 18.

An vnchristian thinge to prescribe a measure to forgiuenes of sinnes.

Seuenthly, as this kingdome of God hath no measure or li-

mits of forgiuenes of sinnes, so also it hath no ende, but endureth continually without ceassing: albeit the subiects of this kingdom doe not abide in it continually, firmely and faithfully, but do often times forsake it. So the fauour and grace of God were continually with Peter, although he denied the Lorde, and reuolted from him. To the same effect tendeth the parable in the Gospell whereof we haue now spoken. For the seruaunt, which would not haue pitie of his felow seruaunt, did make him selfe vnworthy of the mercy of God, did depriue him selfe of the kingdom of God, which consisteth in pardoning of offences, as it is aboue mentioned. Here Vniuersitie Diuines of a pregnant wit, as they seeme vnto them selues, and puffed vp with knowledge, haue disputed, whether, and how forgiuenes of sinnes doth come againe, when man iterateth or renueth his sinne, not knowing what they say. But follow thou the plaine and simple wordes of the Gospell, to wit, that thy sinnes are so often forgiuen thee, as thou doost forgiue thy brother, whom thou must so often forgiue as he shall offend against thee. Wherefore in this parable, whereof I haue euen now made mention, Christ doth admonish vs all, that we pardon and forgiue all them that haue offended vs. As if he would say: As in mans affayres, he which is beneficial to an other, hath other also beneficiall vnto him againe, so sayth Christ, in ỹ kingdom of heauen, which consisteth specially in forgiuenes of sinnes, that is in Christianity or among Christians, he which pardoneth an other his offences, I also will pardon him his. And on the contrary, he that is not mercifull toward an other, to him I also will deny grace. I am ouer you as Lord and King, and ye are felow seruaunts and companions one with an other. Seeing therefore that I your Lorde doe readily forgiue you, you also ought more readily to forgiue one an other. After the same sort also he hath commaunded vs to pray in the Lords prayer, Matth. 6: Forgiue vs our dettes: which he would not haue done, if he did not promise and would not mercifully forgiue vs. But neuertheles he added a condition or signe to this promise, when he sayth: If ye forgiue men their trespasses, your heauenly Father will also forgiue you. The first is a signe, ỹ other a promise. Marke that it is here enioyned vs, to forgiue one an other his sinnes and offences, so, that we must be mercifull and bountifull towarde our neighbours, if we will haue the heauenly father gentle and appeased toward

We must forgiue our brethren when they offend against vs.

toward vs. And let vs be most certainly perswaded hereof, when we shall interpret at the best, and excuse, as much as equitie doth suffer, the offences and trespasses of other, although they be euen great and grieuous, that we also shall haue a bountifull and mercifull father toward vs in heauen. Wherefore it is a thinge most abhorring from Christianitie, and euen blasphemous, when it is sayd: I can not, neither will I forgiue him that which he hath committed against me, I wil be reuenged, &c. Surely those blind mē are ignorant, that they doe take from God his glory, to whom alone vengeance belongeth, and chalenge it to them selues, and so they giue vp to the deuill their owne soules, which they haue receiued of God, & ought to render them vnto him againe, whereunto they are perhaps prouoked euen with some small or trifleling matter. Such kind of men as these ought to sette before the eyes of their hart, these wordes of the Gospell, Matth. 18: O euill seruant, I forgaue thee all that dette, because thou prayedst me: oughtest not thou also to haue had pitie on thy fellow seruant, euen as I had pitie on thee? So his Lord was wrath, & deliuered him to the tormentors, til he should pay all that was due to him: So likewise shall mine heauenly Father doe vnto you, except ye forgiue from your harts eche one to his brother their trespasses. Neither is it sufficient, if in gestures, signes, mouth or tongue thou shew thy selfe a frend vnto him, and forgiue him, but thou must doe it from thy hart, otherwise God will not forgiue thee, yea thou shalt be driuen out of the kingdom of grace. Wherefore if at any tyme we haue tryed the mercy of God towarde vs, we must also readily pardon our felow brethren, which haue offended vs. For in that respect the mercifull Father forgiueth vs our sinnes, that we also should forgiue our brethren, & shew mercy toward them, euen as he is merciful toward vs, and remitteth sinne, death, the fault and the punishment. When we shal do this, then are we receiued into the kingdom of God. For the goodnes of God liueth in our hartes, and maketh vs also good. Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Father, yet neuertheles he reigneth in the hartes and consciences of the faithfull, so that they loue, feare, reuerence, and diligently obey him, no otherwise then obedient subiects doe their King, and in all their doinges are made like to him, euen as he him selfe sayth, Matth. 5: Be ye perfect, as your Father vvhich is in heauen, is perfect. Now God is perfect

A most vnchristian thing not to forgiue our brethren, but to beare malice in our hart & seeke to be reuenged.

in this, that he taketh away and pardoneth our wickednes, defect, sinne, and imperfection, that we also may doe the like to our brethren. But when as we shall not doe the like, we are driuen out of his kingdom, & are made subiect to the kingdom of sinne, death, and the deuill, as disloyall and disobedient inhabitants of some countrie, are thrust out. Which God of his mercy turne from vs, Amen.

All these thinges may be comprehended in the principall poyntes followving.

1 *Christ reigneth, when by faith of the Gospell, he worketh the goodnes and grace of God in our hartes, and maketh them like vnto God.*

2 *In such a kingdom the conscience enioyeth peace, consolation and rest, when it vnderstandeth and knoweth that God is mercifull vnto it, and imputeth not sinnes.*

3 *Therefore man beareth all kind of tribulation and affliction, by which sinne is scoured, and the force thereof abated. He also endeuoureth to be beneficiall vnto other, as he him selfe hath bene as it were ouerwhelmed of the benefits of God.*

4 *And so the Lord reigneth after two sortes: First, for that he maketh the faithfull certaine of the grace of God, and remission of sinnes. Secondly, for that he layeth the crosse vpon them, that the body of sinne may be weakened, and they brought to amendement.*

5 *He that forgiueth his detters pertaineth to the kingdom of God, but he that doth not forgiue them, remaineth vnder the kingdom of sinne.*

These things I thought good to speake in this present place concerning the kingdom of heauen, the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of Christ, which is the same: to wit, that it is nothing else but a kingdom, in which thou shalt finde nothing but forgiuenes of sinnes. Which kingdom is preached and offered vnto vs by the Gospell, God graunt that we may so receiue it. Amen.

A

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER OF PRAYER.

That prayer may be good in deede, and may also be heard, we must first consider that two thinges are necessarie thereunto: one, that we first meditate vpon the promise of God, and doe as it were aduertize God thereof, and trusting vnto it, be emboldned and made cheerefull to pray: for vnles God had commaunded vs to pray, and had promised also that he will heare vs, euen all creatures could not obtayne so much as a grayne by their petitions. Whereupon it followeth, that no man doth obtayne any thinge of God for his owne worthines, or the worthines of his prayer, but by the onely goodnes of God, who preuenting all our petitions and desires, prouoketh vs to pray and desire of him, by his gentle and bounteous promise and commaundement, that we may learne howe great care he hath ouer vs, and is ready to giue vs moe thinges, then we durst enterprise to aske, and that we may also learne to pray boldely, inasmuch as he giueth vs all thinges euen in more ample maner then we doe aske them. It is necessarie that we doe no whit doute of the promise of the true and faythfull God, for therefore he hath promised that he will heare vs, yea and hath commaunded vs to pray, that we might haue a sure and stronge fayth, that our prayer shall be so heard, as he sayth Matth. 21. and Marke 11: VVhatsoeuer ye shall aske in prayer, if ye beleeue, ye shall receyue it. And in Luke chapt. 11: And I say vnto you, Aske, and it shall be giuen you: seeke, and ye shall finde: knocke, and it shall be opened vnto you. For euery one that asketh, receiueth: and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a sonne shall aske bread of any of you that is a father, will ye giue him a stone? or if he aske a fish, will ye for a fish, giue him a serpent? or if he aske an egge, will ye giue him a scorpion? If ye then vvhich are euill, can giue good giftes vnto your children, how

The promise of God is first to be considered of in prayer.

We must no thing doute of the promise of God in prayer.

much more shall your heauenly Father giue the holy Ghost to them that desire him? We must boldly trust to these, and such like promises and commaundements, and pray with true confidence.

He that douteth of the promises of God in praier, committeth a double sinne.

If one so prayeth, that he dout whether God heare him, and maketh his prayer onely at aduenture, caring not greatly whether it be hearde or not hearde: he committeth a double offence: One, for that he him selfe maketh his praier frustrate, and laboureth in vaine. For so James sayth chap. 1: He that vvill aske of the Lord let him aske in faith, and vvauer not: for he that vvauereth, is like a vvaue of the sea, tost of the vvinde, and caried avvay, let not that man thinke that he shall receiue any thinge of the Lord. Such a mans hart is not quiet & setled, wherefore God can giue him nothing. But faith maketh the hart quiet, and capable of the gifts of God. The other offence is, that he counteth the most faithfull and true God, as a lying, vaine, and vnconstant man, as he which neither is able, neither will fulfill his promises, so by his douting he robbeth God of his honour, & name of faithfulnes, and truth. Whereby it is so grieuously offended, that euen that offence being committed, a Christian is plainly chaunged into an Heathen, and denieth and loseth his true God, so that if he continue therein, he is damned for euer without all comfort. And if any thing be giuen vnto him, which he aſketh, it is giuen him not to good, but to euill, as well temporall as eternall, not for his prayers sake, but from the wrath of God, that he may recompense those goodly wordes, which are vttered in sinnes, vnbeleefe, and to the dishonour of God.

We must not therefore dout in our prayers for that we be vnworthy.

Some say: I would trust in deede that my prayers should be heard, if I were worthy, or if I could pray well. Then, say I, if thou wilt not pray, before thou shalt knowe and finde thy selfe fit to pray, that thou shalt neuer pray. For as it is before sayde, our prayer must not rest vpon our worthines, or the worthines of it selfe, or be grounded thereon, but vpon the immutable truth of the promise of God. If so be that it trust to it selfe or any other thing, and ground it selfe thereon, it is false, and deceiueth thee, albeit thy hart should euen be burst by reason of the ardent affection of godlines, and thou shouldest weepe nothing but droppes of blood. For therefore we pray, because we are vnworthy to pray, and hereby surely we are made worthy to pray, and fit to be heard, inasmuch

inasmuch as we thinke that we are vnworthy, and doe boldly and cheerefully trust to the faithfulnes and truth of God. Although thou be vnworthy, yet haue regard hereunto, and marke most diligently, that a thousand times more consisteth in this, that thou honour the truth of God, and not with thy doutfulnes accuse his faithfull promise of falshood. For thy owne worthines doth not further thee, neither thy vnworthines hinder thee: but infidelitie doth condemne thee, trust and confidence maketh thee worthy & preserueth thee. Wherefore so behaue thy selfe all thy life long, that thou doe not at any time esteeme thy selfe either worthy or fit to pray or receiue, vnles thou finde thy selfe to be such a one, as dareth enterprise the matter freely, trusting to the true and certaine promise of thy mercifull God, which will so shewe both his mercy and goodnes vnto thee, that as he promised to heare thee being vnworthy, and hauing not deserued it, of his meere grace, moued with no prayers: so he will heare thee being an vnworthy asker, of his onely grace, to the honour of his truth and promise, that so thou mayst giue thankes, not to thy owne worthines, but to his truth, wherby he hath fulfilled his promise, and to his mercy, whereby he hath made and set forth his promise. And this the 25 Psalme confirmeth, where Dauid sayth: Gracious and righteous is the Lord, therefore vvill he teach sinners in the vvay. He vvill guide the meeke in iudgement, and teach the humble his vvay. All the pathes of the Lord are mercy and truth, vnto such as keepe his couenaunt, and his testimonies. Grace and mercy are in his promise, faithfulnes or truth in fulfilling and hearing. And in the 85 Psalme he sayth: Mercy and truth are met togither, righteousnes and peace haue kissed eche other, that is, they come togither in euery worke and gift, which we obtaine of the Lord by praying.

How we are made worthy to be heard in prayer.

In this trust and confidence thou must so behaue thy selfe, that thou doe not limit to the Lorde any bound or ende, day or place, neither appoynt any maner or measure of hearing, but that thou do commit all those things to his diuine wil, wisedom, and omnipotencie, that thou boldly and cheerefully looke to be heard, and yet not desire to know, how, and where, how soone, and how long, and by what meanes. For his diuine wisedom, shall finde a better maner and measure, time and place, then we can thinke, euen although that should be done by miracles. Euen as in the olde Te-

We must not appoint vnto God how, when, or where he shall heare our prayers.

ſtament, Exod. 14, when the children of Iſraell truſted that God would deliuer them, and yet no poſſible meanes were before their eyes, or in all their thoughts, then the red ſea opened it ſelfe, and gaue them paſſage, drowning all their enemies at once. The holy woman Iudith, when ſhe heard that the Citizens of Bethulia would after the ſpace of fiue dayes giue vp the citie, if God in the meane time did not helpe them, rebuked them ſaying: VVhat are ye, that ye tempt the Lorde? theſe are not deuiſes and purpoſes, whereby we obtayne mercy of God, but rather whereby we prouoke him vnto wrath and diſpleaſure. VVill ye ſet the mercy of the Lorde a time, and appoint him a day after your will? Hereupon God did helpe her after a meruelous ſort, that at the laſt ſhe ſlue Holofernes, and put the enemies to flight, Iudith 13: So S. Paule alſo ſayth, Epheſ. 3: that the power of God is ſuch and ſo great, that it doth farre greater and better thinges then we eyther aſke or thinke. Wherfore we ought to thinke our ſelues more vile, then that we may name, appoynt, or preſcribe the time, place, maner, meaſure, and other circumſtances of that which we aſke of God, but we muſt leaue all thinges wholy vnto him, conſtantly and boldly beleeuing that he will heare vs.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, CONCERNING THE BIDDING OF GVESTS TO THE great ſupper.

Luke 14.

Verſe 16. A Certaine man made a great ſupper, and bad many.

17. And ſent his ſeruaunt at ſupper time to

to say to them that were bidden: Come, for all things are now ready.

18. But they all with one mind began to make excuse: The first sayd vnto him, I haue bought a farme, and I must needes goe out and see it: I pray thee haue me excused.

19. And an other sayd, I haue bought fiue yoke of oxen, and I go to proue them: I pray thee haue me excused.

20. And an other sayd, I haue maried a wife, and therefore I can not come.

21. So that seruaunt returned, & shewed his maister these things: Then was the good man of the house angry, and sayd to his seruaunt: Go out quickly into the streetes & lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poore, & the maymed, and the halt, and the blinde.

22. And the seruaunt sayd, Lord it is done as thou hast commaunded, and yet there is roome.

23. Then the maister sayd to the seruaunt: Go out into the hie wayes & hedges, & compel them to come in, that mine house may be filled.

24. For I saye vnto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall tast of my supper.

AS in the whole Scripture, so in this text also we must endeuour, that according to our abilitie (as ye haue often tymes hearde heretofore) we may vnderstande the true and simple meaninge, and thereupon settle our harte and conscience. For he that shall encounter with Satan, must not wauer and stagger this way and that way, but must be certayne of his cause, and instructed with manifest places of Scripture, otherwise when the Deuill shall by an vncertaine place of Scripture drawe him to his forke, he will tosse him this way and that way, as the wynde dothe a vane leafe. Wherefore out of this

text we must gather a certayne meaning, wherby we may persist and stand sure. Howbeit it is not to be vnderstood of the reuerend Eucharistie, or the bread of the Lordes table, although our Papistes haue miserably wrested it, as they haue done many other authorities of Scripture. But this is the scope, this is ꝑ summe of this text: that the Gospell is preached and published through the whole world, but few receiue and embrace it. And it is therefore here called a supper, for that ꝑ Gospel must be the last word, which shall continue to the ende of the world. Wherfore the supper here is nothing els, but a very rich & sumptuous feast, which God hath made through Christ by the Gospell, which setteth before vs great good things and rich treasures. And he sent his seruaunt to byd men to this sumptuous supper. That is: The Apostles were altogither sent with one word into ꝑ whole world, that they might byd and call men to this supper, with one voyce, with one Gospell, with one ambassade: after such sort, that if S. Peter had come, and preached the Gospell of God in that place where Paule had preached it before, yet had it bene one worde, and the same preaching, that the hearers should haue bene compelled to say: Behold he preacheth the same that we heard before of the other, they wholy consent and agree, & the thinge that they publish is all one. That the Euangelist might insinuate this consent and agreement in preaching, he sayth: He sent his seruaunt, he sayth not, his seruaunts, as of many. Nowe this message the seruaunt must doe to the bidden guests: Come, for all things are now ready. For Christ had suffered death, & in his death had slaine sinne and death, also was risen againe from death, the holy Ghost was giuen: & briefly all thinges were prepared which pertained vnto that great supper. All things were ready without al our cost. For the Father by Christ hath payd the price of all things, that without all our merit and labour we might enioy his goodnes, and be nourished and enriched. He sendeth his seruaunt therefore first to the Iewes, to byd them to this great supper, vnto whom the promise was made of God. For the lawe and all the Prophets were directed hereunto, that they might prepare the people of God. As the Angel Gabriel declared of Iohn the Baptist to his father Zacharias Luke 1: He shall be filled with the holy Ghost euen from his mothers wombe, and many of the children of Israell shall he turne to their Lord God. For he shall goe before him in

The summe of the text.

The message which the seruaũt doth to the guests bidden to the great supper.

the

the spirit and power of Elias, to turne the harts of the fathers to the children, & the disobedient to the wisedom of the iust men, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. But what did the guests aunswere to the message of the seruaunt? the text following declareth.

But they all with one minde began to make excuse. This is that whereof the Lord speaketh Matth. 10: He that loueth father or mother more then me, is not worthy of me. And he that loueth sonne or daughter more then me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his crosse, & followeth after me, is not worthy of me. For he that will be partaker of this supper, must put all thinges into daunger for the Gospells sake, body, goods, wife, children, frendes, &c. Moreouer he must leaue all thinges whatsoeuer they be, that separate him from the Gospell, albeit they seeme good, iust, right, & holy. Neither thinke ye that these mē which here excuse them selues, were gilty of grieuous sinnes, or occupied about vniust matters and workes. For it is not vniust to bie, to vse trade of marchandize, to maintaine him selfe honestly, to marie a wife, to be ioyned in matrimonie. But therefore can they not come to this supper, for that they will not forsake these thinges, but will rather cleaue to them in their hart. Nowe they must be vtterly forsaken and left, when the Gospell so requireth. Thou wilt perhaps say: I would in deede willingly follow the Gospell, I would cleaue vnto it, & doe all other things whatsoeuer, but to forsake goods, houses, familie, wife, children, &c: surely this is a hard matter. God hath commaūded me to labour, to maintaine my wife and children, &c. Beholde therefore this is the scope and summe, that the Gospell is the worde of faith and offence, because of which euery faithfull man doth beare offence willingly. In deede God hath willed thee to doe these thinges, howbeit he hath also commaunded, that thou preferre him before all creatures, and loue him aboue all thinges, and thinke him higher then all thinges which thou canst know, euen as the chiefe and greatest commaundement giueth vs to vnderstande: Thou shalt loue the Lord thy God with all thy hart, with all thy soule, with all thy minde, Deut. 6. Wherefore thou must forsake all thinges before thou suffer thy selfe to be pluckt away from the loue of him, or his worde: although in deede he loseth nothing, which forsaketh any thinge for the Gospells sake. If for the Go-

What they must do that will be partakers of this great supper.

spells sake thou lose this temporall life, God will giue thee an other farre better, to wit, eternall life, as Christ sayth Matth. 10: He that will finde his life, shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall finde it. If thou be compelled to forsake thy wife togither with thy children, remember that God hath a care of them, he will be a better father vnto them then thy selfe, which vndoutedly commeth to passe, if so be thou beleeue. For we haue very great & rich promises that he wil not suffer his word to fail, but will alwayes fulfill it, if we can freely and confidently trust in him, and commit our selues wholy vnto him. Christ sayth after this sort Matth. 19: VVhosoeuer shall forsake houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or landes, for my names sake, he shall receiue an hundreth folde more, and shall inherit euerlasting life. We haue here his words and promise: what would we haue more? or what can we desire more? wherein therefore doe we fayle? onely in our faith. Wherfore no man commeth to this supper, but he that bringeth with him a sincere faith, which God preferreth and loueth aboue all creatures. But how doth the Lord recompense them which excused them selues that they could not come to the supper? The text it selfe declareth.

A sound faith required in the guests of this supper.

Then vvas the good man of the house angry, and sayd to his seruaunt: Goe out quickly into the streetes and lanes of the citie, and bring in hither the poore, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. To goe into the streetes and lanes is nothing else, but that whereas the Iewes made them selues vnworthy of the Gospell, and did refuse it, the Disciples turned to the Gentiles. For it was enioyned them of Christ, that they shoulde not turne them selues to the Gentiles, nor preach the kingdom of God in the cities of the Samaritanes, but should goe onely to the sheepe of the house of Israell, and should feede them onely, as they did. Now the Iewes striuing against this worde, and by no meanes receiuing it, the Disciples sayd, Act. 13: It was necessary that the word of God should first haue bin spoken vnto you: but seeing ye put it from you, and iudge your selues vnworthy of euerlasting life, lo, we turne to the Gentiles: for so hath the Lord cõmaunded vs, saying: I haue made thee a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be the saluation vnto the ende of the world. But what meaneth that which he sayth moreouer to ỹ seruaunt?

The Gospell was first to be preached to the Iewes who because they refused it, the Apostles turned to the Gentiles.

Goe

Goe out into the hie wayes and hedges, and compell them to come in, that myne house may be filled. This is to be vnderstood of desperat and weake consciences, which also pertaine vnto this supper, and are compelled vnto it, but this compulsion is not outward, but inward and spirituall, and is done after this sort. When the law is preached, sinne is set before our eyes and reuealed, that a man may come to knowledge of him selfe, so that to compel, to enter or come in, doth rightly signifie, to driue sinne into the conscience, wherby a man may know that he is nothing, that all his workes are sinnes, and subiect to damnation, and so sodainly his conscience may become desperate, and his hart faint and terrified, that all that confidence and opinion of helpe may depart, and man him selfe be able no where to comfort him selfe in any thinge, and at the last be driuen to despeire of him selfe. If so be that one be once after this sort compelled, then doe not long delay to let him come in, but deliuer the man out of desperation. That commeth to passe, when thou comfortest him by the Gospell, and declarest that he is deliuered from his sinnes, saying: Beleeue in Christ, that he hath made thee free from thy sinnes, then shalt thou be deliuered and free from sinne. And this is the meaning of that which he sayth: Compell them to come in. It is not to be vnderstoode of outwarde compulsion, as some interprete it, that wicked and vngodly ones shoulde be violently driuen to the supper, for this preuayleth nothing, neyther is it so meant in this place. Wherefore it is to be referred onely to the conscience, and is inwarde and spirituall. Nowe he goeth on to speake to the seruaunte and the rest.

What it is to compell to come in.

For I say vnto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall tast of my supper. This is the conclusion, that they which thinke themselues most certaine that they shall come to the supper, and tast of it, shall not tast of it: The reason ye haue heard. Nowe briefly the guests that are bidden and do not come, are they, which thinke that they shall obtaine the supper by their owne workes, verie much wearying themselues, thinking assuredly, that they shall tast of it. But the Lord mightely concludeth and sayth: Not one of these men shall tast of my supper. Wherefore most gentle Lord? They haue cõmitted no wicked thinge, neither haue bin occupied about vniust matters. Behold,

Why they that were bidden shall not tast of the supper.

this is the reason, for that they haue forsaken fayth, and haue not confessed it freely before euerie one, neither haue preferred that rich and sumptuous supper before all creatures. For seeing it is sumptuous, it requireth those men that do iudge it to be so, and do put any thinge in daunger, what soeuer it be, that they may be partakers of it. Thus ye haue the compendious meaning of this text, which I haue onely briefly runne ouer, if any will expound it more at large, I am well content he so do.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER OF THE WORKES OF CHARITIE.

Luke 6.

Verse. 36. IEsus said vnto his disciples: Be ye mercifull as your father also is mercifull.

37. Iudge not, and ye shall not be iudged: condemne not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgiue, and ye shalbe forgiuen.

38. Giue & it shalbe giuen vnto you: a good measure, pressed downe, shaken togither, and running ouer shall men giue into your bosom: for with what measure ye meat, with the same shall men meat to you again.

39. And he spake a parabale vnto them: Can the blynde lead the blynde? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

40. The disciple is not aboue his maister: but whosoeuer wilbe a perfect disciple, shalbe as his maister.

41. And

41. And why seest thou a mote in thy brothers eye, and considerest not the beame that is in thine owne eye?

42. Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou seest not the beame that is in thine owne eye? Hypocrite, cast out the beame out of thine owne eye first, and then shalt thou see perfectly to pull out the mote that is in thy brothers eye.

THE workes of charitie which we must do to our neighbours in temporall thinges and in corporall necessitie, are discribed vnto vs in this text: which the Lorde then declared, when he sayde a litle before in the same chapter, that we must do well vnto our enemies, and bestow benefits vpon them which hate vs: that we must blesse them that curse vs: that we must pray for them which persecute vs: if any man smite vs on the one cheeke, we must offer vnto him also the other: and if any man take away our cloke, we must not forbid him to take away our coate also, &c. All which he comprehending in a briefe summe, sayth: Be ye mercifull, as your Father also is mercifull. Here ye see all good workes summarily described which we must exercise among our selues, as our heauenly father hath exercised them toward vs. Ye haue oftentimes heard, that it is not needefull to do good workes toward God, but toward our neighbour onely. God can be made neither stronger nor richer by our workes: but man may be strengthened and enriched by them, vnto whom also they are necessarie, vnto whom onely they are to be directed, and not vnto God, which ye haue very often heard, and which is now in your eares: but would to God it would at the last burst forth both into your handes and workes. Marke therefore how peruerse an order it is, when any deale with God by workes, with whom notwithstanding they must deale by onely faith, and when faith is directed vnto man, whereas it is to be placed in God alone. Turne these contrariwise, and they shalbe right, after this sort: let vs first repose faith in God alone, and let vs then giue our

We must deale with God by faith and with our neighbours by good workes.

selues to serue our neighbours, and to direct all our workes so, that they may turne to their commoditie. We must deale before God by no other thing but by faith alone, because none is able to helpe vs but God onely, & whatsoeuer we possesse either in mind or body, that commeth wholy to vs from God alone, in whom we ought to trust, vpon whom we ought to set our hart. Nowe some vse suche a preposterous order, that they repose faithe, which ought to haue respect vnto God onely, in them selues and others, they rest vpon their traditions, and whatsoeuer their great maisters haue inuented, in that they put their trust. Of such God sayth in Jeremie? My people hath done two euills: one, for that they haue forsaken me the well of the water of life, and digged them pitts, yea vile and broken pitts that can holde no water: An other, for that thou darest say: I am without sinne and giltles, tush, his wrath can not come vpon me: behold I will reason with thee, because thou darest say, I haue not offended.

Ier. 2.

First he sayth, that his spouse is turned into an harlot, and hath estraunged her selfe from God the fountaine of life, from whom life, saluation & euery good thing floweth, him they haue forsaken. Secondly they set vp their owne traditions, and digge vnto them selues a fountaine of their owne, which can holde no water. So our Papistes trust to their owne inuentions, to their founding of Masses, to their fastinges, prayers, and such like things. Which appeare to be as a fountaine, out of which they would draw life, and blessednes or saluation, when as notwithstanding it is able to hold no water: they forsake God the fountaine of life. Afterward he sayth: they dare rise against me, that I should not be angrie with them, alleging that their workes be iust, and they will goe to law with me. Beholde this is an other sinne, that they goe about to defende their workes. Whereupon God also sayth: I wil cõtend with thee in iudgment, & wil shew how thou gaddest hither and thither to change thy wayes. So faith pertaineth to God alone, whereunto it belongeth to obtaine all whatsoeuer thinges are necessary, as well temporall thinges as eternall, and so to obtaine them, that it thinke not that it hath merited in any thing. Also it must againe apply it self downward toward our neighbour, with out looking for any recompense, not that blessednes consisteth in that deriuing of faith, to wit charity, for neither doth God require that, who will haue the conscience

Faith obtaineth all good thinges of God.

to

to rest onely in him: euen as the spouse must cleaue onely to her husbande and to no other: so also God requireth of vs that we trust in him alone. These things Christ declareth when he saith: Be ye mercifull as your father is mercifull. Wherefore I must so order my conscience toward God, that I vndoutedly beleeue, that I haue him a bountifull and mercifull father, as I will afterward declare, and that I also do shew mercy toward my neighbour. Which faith must be inward, and caried vpward vnto God, but workes must be without, and deriued downward to our neighbour. After this sort Abraham did, when at the mountaine in the countrie of Moria he ascended to God, he left his seruaunts and asses below at the bottome of the mountaine, taking onely Isaac with him. The same must be done of vs if we will ascend vnto God, that we may come to him with Isaac onely, that is, with faith, seruaunts and asses, that is workes, are to be left below. Thus much for the entraunce of this text concerning faith and workes, to wit that faith must pearce inward and vpward, but workes must go without and downeward, whereby at the length it commeth to passe, that we are righteous before God and men, for that we giue due honour vnto God, and beleeue according to his word, and satisfie our neighbour in the dutie of loue. Nowe let vs see the very wordes of the text in order.

How our heauenly Father is mercifull toward vs.

Be ye mercifull as your Father is mercifull. How therefore is our heauenly father mercifull? after that sort, that he giueth vs all good thinges, corporall and spirituall, transitorie and eternall, freely and of his mercy. For if he should giue vnto vs according to our desert, he should giue vnto vs nothing but hell fire and eternall damnation. What soeuer therefore good thinges he bestoweth vpon vs, he bestoweth them of his meere mercy. He seeth vs sticke fast in death, therefore he hath mercy vpon vs and giueth vs life: he seeth vs to be the children of hell, therefore he taking pitie vpon vs, giueth vnto vs heauen: He seeth vs to be miserable and naked, hungerie and thirstie, it pitying him hereof, he clotheth vs, and refresheth vs with meat & drinke, & maketh vs full of all good things: So what soeuer we haue either in body or in spirit, he giueth it vs of his meere mercy, without any merit or desert of ours. Whereupon Christ here saith: Imitate your father, & be ye mercifull like vnto him. This

What kinde of mercy reason teacheth vs to vse.

is not simple mercy, such as reason teacheth, for that is greedy of her owne commoditie, which giueth onely to great and learned men, and to them that deserue it: it loueth them that be fayre and beautifull: it giueth vnto them, of whom it looketh for profit and commoditie againe, which is a mercy diuided, begging, and as it were torne and broken in peeces. For if I shall giue to him that hath deserued, or if I shall regard fayrenes or friendship, it is a bargaine or det, and not mercy. Hereof Christ speaketh in the same chapter before this text in this wise: If ye loue them which loue you, what thanke shall ye haue? and if ye do good for them which do good for you, what thanke shall ye haue? for euen the synners do the same: and if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receiue, what thanke shall ye haue? for euen the synners lend to synners to receiue the like. But the mercy of Christians must not seeke her owne, but so behaue it selfe, that it be indifferent, that it regard all alike with open eyes, both freinds and foes, euen as our heauenly father doth.

Luke 6.

Where true mercy is not, neither is there any true faith.

And where soeuer this mercy is not, neither is there faith also. For thy heart being setled in faith, so that thou knowest God to haue shewed himselfe thy God, so gentle and bountifull, without thy desert and of mere grace, when thou wast as yet his enemie, and the childe of euerlasting malediction, thy heart I say being setled in this faith, thou canst not containe thy selfe, but that thou shew thy selfe againe so to thy neighbour, & that wholy for the loue of God, and for thy neighbours commodities sake. Take heede therefore what difference thou make betweene a friend and an enemie, betweene the worthy and vnworthy: for ye see all which are in this text rehearsed, to haue otherwise deserued of vs, then that we should loue them, or do well vnto them. And the same thing the Lord meaneth when he sayeth Luke 6: But loue your enemies, do well vnto them, lend, looking for nothing againe, and your reward shalbe great, and ye shalbe the children of the most High: for he is kinde vnto the vnkinde, and to the euell.

An obiectiō.

But how commeth it to passe that a certain contrarie thing to ꝑ which we haue taught seemeth to appeare in this text, where he saith? Be ye merciful, as your heauēly Father is merciful: againe, Iudge not, and ye shal not be iudged: condemne not, & ye shall not be condemned: forgiue and it shalbe forgiuen you. All which

which authorities sound so, that we must deale before God with our workes, and by them deserue the mercy of God, when as notwithstanding ye haue very often heard, that faith alone doth all? and both Paul and the whole Scripture do commonly say and affirme, that we must beleeue in God alone, and deale by onely mere faith before him. It is requisite here to vnderstand that good workes are onely a setting forth and commendation of faith, so that if I beleeue, I must be mercifull, I must not iudge nor condemne my neighbour, I must forgiue, and giue vnto my neighbour. Whereof set an example before your selues. What did Abraham being commaunded to offer his sonne? he obeyed the commaundement, and drew forth the sword to kill his sonne: what ensued thereupon? the Angell of the Lord stayed him, saying: lay not thy hand vpon the child, neither do any thing vnto him: for now I know that thou feareſt God, forasmuch as for my sake thou hast not spared thine onely sonne.

The answer.

Gen. 22.

Howbeit this is here to be knowen and marked of vs, that we must first receiue, before we giue: before we shew mercy, we must receiue mercy of God: we do not lay the first stone, neither doth the shepe seeke the shepeheard, but the shepeheard the shepe. Wherefore so bestow thy workes in euerie respect, that thou looke for nothing at Gods hand because of them: for we obtaine euen euerie thing of God without merit or desert: so God sayth Esay 65: I am found of them that seeke not for me, I haue appeared to them that aske not for me. And in the ende of the same chapter: The time shall come (sayth God) that or euer they call I will aunswere them, and while they are yet but thinking how to speake, I will heare them. For in deede before we seeke him, he fyndeth vs, before we aske him, he heareth vs. Likewise S. Paul sayth Rom. 3: There is no difference: for all haue sinned, and are depriued of the glorie of God, and are iustified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Iesus: whom God hath set forth to be a recõciliatiõ through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousnes, in that he forgiueth the synnes that are past, through the patience of God, to shew at this time his righteousnes, that he might be iust, and a iustifier of him which is of the faith of Iesus. And in the chapter following he sayeth: Now to him that worketh the wages is not counted by fauour but by dette: but to him that worketh not,

We must receiue mercy before we shew mercy.

We obtaine all good thinges of god through his meere mercy.

but beleeueth in him that iustifieth the vngodly, his faith is coũted for righteousnes. For if it be of Grace, it is no more of works, or els were grace no more grace, as he saith afterward in the eleuenth chapter.

Our good workes must be signes and testimonies of our sincere faith.

Againe, I must bestow my workes so, that they maye be a certaine signe, and as it were a seale grauen with letters, whereby I may be assured that my faith is syncere. For if I feele in my heart, that my worke proceedeth from loue, I am sure concerning the integritie and soundnes of my faith. If I forgiue, the same forgiuenes doth assure me concerning the sincerities of my faith, doth declare my faith, and certifie me, that God hath also pardoned my synne, and doth daily more and more pardon me. So it fell out with Abraham, his worke made his faith knowne vnto him. God in deede knew that he did beleeue, but it behoued that Abraham also should know, and shew forth his faith. Wherefore workes folowing onely freely as fruites of faith, are declarations of such a faith. For what should it profit me, if I had euen a strong faith, but vnknowen vnto me? euen as if I should haue a chest full of gold, yet I being ignoraunt thereof, should take no commoditie thereby. But if any would shew it vnto me, he should do me as great a pleasure, as if he gaue it me. So if I haue faith and yet be ignoraunt thereof, it is no profit vnto me. Wherefore it must burst forth, and be shewed by the workes that ensue, which are both signes and seales of the
2. Pet. 1. 18. 19 present faith. Soe Sainct Peter meaneth, when speaking of the workes of charitie, and the vertues of faith, he concludeth thus: Wherefore brethren, giue rather diligence, to make your calling and election sure, which if ye do, ye shall not fall. For by this meanes an entering shalbe ministred vnto you aboundantly into the euerlasting kingdome of our Lord and Sauiour Iesus Christ. He sayeth not, do good workes, that by them ye may be called, but that ye may more assure your selues of your calling. Accustome your selues therefore well vnto the phrases and maner of speakinges vsed in the Scripture, that ye rush not vpon them like blinde moules, and confirme workes in such places as this: for herein workes are reiected if we thinke, that we are iustified by them: but herein they are extolled and commended, in that they are profitable to our neighbour and frutes and signes of faith. Behold, it was meete that I should make this

this digression, least I should cõfirme the meaning of ỹ Papists.

Now if it should be demaunded why God oftentimes setteth downe such contrarie sentences, and disagreeing one with another, as it seemeth to vs & our reason, I aunswere, that he may exercise vs in reading, and that we should not thinke that we vnderstand the whole Scripture, when we scarce vnderstand one place. Some sayinges do guide the spirit, how we ought to behaue our selues toward God, onely by faith, as this: VVe are iustified freely. Againe lest the body should be sluggish outwardly, there are sentences also set forth vnto vs, which do guide and exercise the body, as these which we haue heard here rehearsed: Forgiue, and ye shalbe forgiuen: also where as Christ affirmeth, that he will require workes in the last day, and will say after this sort vnto the condemned, Matthew 25: I was an hungred, and ye gaue me no meat: I thirsted, & ye gaue me no drinke: I was a straunger, and ye tooke me not in vnto you: I was naked and ye clothed me not, &c. Which sentences, whiles ignorant and light spirits labour to wrest and applie to workes, they see not how great euell they commit. But spirituall men referre them to the very body onely, they them selues standing naked before God in spirit, which is both iust and necessarie. For there are two thinges in man, the Spirit and the Flesh. Hereupon there are some places which do guide onely faith in the spirit: some, which do direct onely workes in the body: for one place can not direct both the body and the spirite together. We must so do with our substance, that we be willing to part from it, to lend, and to giue to our neighbour, when it shalbe requisite. And if we see any not to haue, wherewith to make restitution, we must release him, and forgiue the dette according to the example of Nehemias, as we read in Esdras. 1. Esd. 5. For God hath giuen many things vnto vs, who is able to giue vs moe thinges also if we beleeue. And thus we heare that if we will be Christians, we ought to lend, giue, and to be willing to part from that which we haue, otherwise we shall not shew the frutes of a liuely faith. Wherefore lay vp this text inwardly in your mindes, that ye deale by no other thing before God, but by onely faith, and referre and bestow your workes to the only seruice and profit of your neighbour. Thus much shall suffice to haue bin spoken concerning the former part. Now what is to be sayd moreouer of this text, or

Why God wil haue sentences in the Scriptures which seeme contrarie.

Rom. 3. 24.

what doth follow we will afterward consider. In the wordes following the Lord interpreteth himselfe, what kinde of mercy he understandeth, saying after this sort.

Judge not, and ye shall not be iudged: condemne not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgiue, and ye shalbe forgiuen: Giue, and it shalbe giuen vnto you. In this place the Lord diuideth mercy into three partes, that we maye not be ignorant, what maner of mercy that ought to be, which it behoueth vs to shew to our neighbours. First iudgement and condemnation is taken from vs. Then thou must forgiue thy neighbour if he hath committed any thing against thee. Lastly thou must helpe the needy. These thinges this word (Mercie) signifieth, where soeuer it cõmeth in the Scriptures. And all these must proceede from a syncere heart, all colouring and flatterie being taken away, that there be no respect had of the person. For if thou desirest to will well and to wish well to them, which will well to thee: or to do well to them, which do well to thee: or to hurt them, which hurt thee, thou art vtterly deceiued. But thou must do so, as Christ saith a litle before: Imitate thy heauenly father, loue thine enemie: do wel to him, which doth euel to thee: forgiue him that hurteth thee: lend to the needy, and so of the rest. That therefore we may speake of the former part, that we must not iudge or condemne, we must marke, that God hath ordained the sword of the magistrate, to the punishing of publike offences, so that it be prouided that it be not done against the precept and commaundemẽt of God, as that the innocẽt be not executed: for whereas the iudge dealeth vniustly, he is as well an homicide as an other, of which iudgement Christ saith nothing here. Els where he maketh mẽtion thereof, when as he said to him, which desired, that he would byd his brother diuide the inheritance with him: Who made me a iudge or a diuider ouer you? For the care & gouerning of outward thinges do not belong to the kingdome of Christ.

Three parts of mercy.

The first part of mercy not to iudge or condemne an other.

Luk. 12. 14.

Of what iudgement Christ speaketh in this place.

But Christ speaketh here of an other iudgement, namely of that whereby one reputeth and compteth an other good or euell, when as notwithstanding he seeth no good or euell to be done of him. Which iudgement belongeth only vnto God. For it may be that thou see thy brother offend to day, whom notwithstanding to morow God doth receiue, thẽ may he both be, and also seeme vnto thee to be good, neither must thou remember his synnes, for that

that Christ hath forbidden. For there can not be either any loue, or concord, where this iudgement and condemnation is vsuall amongst men. To iudge & condemne an other is nothing els, then to haue a beame in his owne eye, which all hypocrites do without dout beare in their eyes. For they that iudge themselues good, are offended at their brother, what soeuer others do, it displeaseth them, forasmuch as they will not acknowledge their owne synne. But it commeth to passe, that when thou seest many sinnes in others, thou seest not the beame that is in thine owne eye, and so fallest into the iudgemēt of God. Hereof it commeth, that thou which iudgest an other, art made worse thē ỹ most wicked baude, or the most vnchast harlot, before God, who alone knoweth who is to be saued, and who to be condemned. Such hypocrites are of that nature, that it is a pleasure vnto them, and they take no smal delight thereof, if they reason and talke either of the adulterie or fault of an other man, yea they increase a small thing or trifle in their neighbour, and what soeuer others do, they interpret it at the worst, so that no mā is able to do that which pleaseth or liketh them. And although they themselues do not such things, yet they willingly here that other men do them, whereas a godly man helpeth as much as he is able, that these thinges may be couered and amended. But it many times falleth out that they are most filthie adulterers euen according to the flesh, which do so iudge and condemne others, howbeit they do not iudge man onely, but euen God himselfe. Wherefore if thy brother be a sinner, cōceale his synne, and pray for him to the Lord: if thou reueale his sinne and reioyce thereat, surely thou art not the child of the mercifull father, for if thou were, thou wouldest be mercifull according as he is. This is a thing most certaine, that we are not able to shew so great mercy to our neighbour, as God both hath & both shew to vs. But that is the practize of Satan, that we do those things which are quite cōtrarie vnto mercy, which is an vndouted signe, that there is no mercy at all in vs. Iudgers of other.

Of these iudgers of other Christ speaketh in the Gospell whē he sayth: Can the blinde lead the blinde? shall they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not aboue his maister: but who soeuer wilbe a perfect disciple, shalbe as his maister. And why seest thou a mote in thy brothers eye, and considerest not the beame, that is in thine owne eye? either how canst thou say to Luke 6.39.

thy brother, Brother, let me pul out the motethat is in thine eye, when thou seest not the beame that is in thine owne eye? Hypocrite, cast out the beame that is in thine own eye first, & thē shalt thou see perfectly to pul out the mote that is in thy brothers eie. As if he said: thou thinkest that thy brother is blinde, and in thy minde doest fynde fault with an other, that is, thou wilt guide an other, whē notwithstāding thou thy selfe art blind. Thou iudgest him a synner, & thy selfe an honest & iust man. What other thing is this, thē for thy heart to be so affected, that thou count thy selfe better? Which is nothing els, then that thou wilt lead & guide other, whē thou thy selfe art blinder thē a moule, so that he which foloweth thee, doth fall with thee into the ditch. Of such as iudge themselues to excell others, & thinke themselues to be followed more thē ỳ word of God. S. Paul speaketh Rom. 2: Behold (saith he) thou art called a Iew, & restest in the law, & gloriest in God, & knowest his will, and triest the thinges that dissent from it, in that thou art instructed by the law, & perswadest thy selfe, that thou art a guide of the blinde, a light of them which are in darknes, an instructer of them which lacke discretiō, a teacher of the vnlearned, which hast the forme of knowledge, & of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest an other teachest thou not thy selfe? thou that preachest, A mā should not steale, doest thou steale? thou that sayest, A man should not cōmit adulterie, doest thou cōmit adulterie? thou that abhorrest idols, cōmittest thou sacrilege? thou that glorifest in the law through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God? Whereupō he also sayth in the beginning of the same chapter to hypocrites: Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, who soeuer thou art, that cōdemnest: for in that that thou condemnest an other, thou condemnest thy selfe: for thou that condemnest doest the same thinges. But we know that the iudgement of God is according to truth, against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O thou man, that cōdemnest thē which do such things, & doest the same, that thou shalt escape the iudgement of God? Loe, this is to speake ỳ truth to hypocrites, who go about to shew ỳ way to other, which they themselues know not, leading so other mē into ỳ ditch with thē. Therfore ỳ Lord saith: The disciple is not aboue his maister, but who soeuer wilbe a perfect disciple, shalbe as his maister. This is a common prouerbe: I can learne no more of my maister then

then he knoweth himselfe. Wherefore doth the Lord speake this prouerbe? because of two sortes of maisters: the one is blynde, whom if I shall follow, I also my selfe shall become blynde: he himselfe falleth into the ditch, and I follow. The other maister is the mercifull father, of whom we must learne mercy: whom if we follow, we also do become mercifull like as he is: if we were mercifull daily, we should also become perfect, as he is perfect, but that commeth not to passe, as long as we are in this life.

The second part of mercy is, that we forgiue them which haue endamaged vs, or hurt vs by any meanes. A Christian can neuer be so hurt, but he ought to forgiue, not onely seuen times, but seuenty times seuen times, as the Lord sayd vnto Peter. Matth. 18. Wherefore God forgiueth a Christian his synne or infirmitie, that he also may forgiue other their infirmitie: which Christ setteth forth els where in a most goodly parable, which he cōcludeth in these wordes: So likewise shall mine heauenly Father do vnto you, except ye forgiue from your hearts, ech one to his brother their trespasses. And so we praye daily in the Lords prayer, with an addition saying: forgiue vs our trespasses, as we forgiue them that trespasse against vs. Is this a hard matter, if I a wretched synner, do forgiue my neighbour his trespasses and his infirmitie, whereas the Lord will forgiue me my synnes and my infirmities? If one had killed my father, what were this being compared to my synne, wherewith I haue offended God, and prouoked him to anger? The second part of mercy, to forgiue. Matth. 18. 35.

The third part of mercy is, that we giue to them that be in miserie and neede, and that we helpe them. Whereof John speaketh thus 1. John 3: VVhosoeuer hath this worldes good, and seeth his brother haue neede, and shutteth vp his compassion from him, how dwelleth the loue of God in him? For where the loue of God is, it is moued to shew it selfe euē in outward works. Hereunto also pertaineth the saying of Christ Matth. 5: Blessed are the mercifull, for they shall obtaine mercy. Wherefore the Lord addeth a promise in the Gospell, saying: Giue and it shalbe giuen vnto you: a good measure, pressed downe, shaken togither, & running ouer shall men giue into your bosome. And continuing on his speech he sayth: For with what measure ye meat, with the same shall men meat to you againe. Thus much shall suffice concerning the partes of mercy which we ought to shew The third part of mercy, to giue to the poore & needy.

to our neighbours. Unto which the speciall wordes of Christ
Matth.7.12. ought to exhort vs, who when in the Gospell of Matthew he had spoken much of a Christian life, and of loue to be shewed to our brethren, thus concludeth saying: VVhat soeuer ye would that men should do to you, euen so do ye to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets. Now euerie one is so affected, that being cast downe, and in distres, he would wish all the world to helpe him. If I be a miserable sinner, drowned in sinnes, bearing a burdened and troubled conscience, I would that the whole world should comfort me, should helpe and succour me, should couer my sinne and shame. So I also ought to behaue my selfe toward my neighbour, not to iudge him, not to condemne him, but to forgiue him his offences, to helpe him, to prouide for him, to lend vnto him, & giue him, euen as I would wish to be done vnto my selfe if I were driuen into distres, necessitie, exile, or pouerty. And herein truly Christians are knowne, if they loue one an other, if one do such workes of mercy vnto an other, as Christ sayd vnto his disciples at his last Supper: I giue you a new commaundement, that ye loue one an other, as I haue loued you. By this shal all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye haue loue one to an other. Thus ye haue the meaning of this text, it remaineth that we call vpon God for grace.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, OF THE SVMME OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

1. *Tim.* 1.

Verse. 5. THE ende of the commaundement is loue out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith vnfeined.

6. From

6. From the which thinges some haue erred, and haue turned vnto vaine iangling.
7. They would be doctours of the Lawe, and yet vnderstand not what they speake, neither whereof they affirme.

IT is well knowne vnto you dearely beloued brethren, with how great seueritie God hath commaunded his worde to be heard and learned. For he most highly esteemeth it, and hath bestowed much labour in defending it, and publishing it to the world. He hath suffred all the Prophets to come into perils and daungers, at the last also he sent his owne sonne because of his worde, whom he suffered to die euen the death of the crosse. And what persecutions haue not the Apostles themselues abode for the wordes sake? what afflictions haue not all Christians suffered? vnto some of which he hath committed the ministerie of his word faithfully to be executed, and to other some hath enioyned the charge of hearing the same. If there were no other cause beside this, whereby we might be moued to heare & learne Gods word, but for that it is the good pleasure, will, and commaundement of God, yet this one ought to be sufficient great & weighty. For it is our dutie as creatures to obey our Lorde and Creator, and that with all readines of mynde, inasmuch as he hath giuen vs so many good thinges, and doth as yet daily giue vs moe, for which we shall neuer be able to giue him sufficient worthie thankes. Gods worde must be heard and learned.

Howbeit he is not content, onely to haue commaunded vs to do this, or to require it of vs as bounden dutie, but promiseth also that great fruits and commodities shall redound to vs thereby, affirming that by this meanes his greatest and highest worship is giuen vnto him. For he is the great Lord, whom we serue, who hath many and diuers kindes of seruice, and manifold maners of worship, and whom we may serue diuers wayes. But this onely seruice which is giuen to him by hearing the word, doth excell all the rest. For if any where a faithfull man of the countrie, or a citizen, or any which is otherwise in subiection doth serue his Lorde or maister, he doth by the same seruice also serue God. Likewise a childe, a manseruaunt or a mayd seruaunt, if they be God is serued diuers waies, but especially by preaching & hearing his worde.

obedient, and do diligently that which belongeth to their duties: also a Prince and parents if they gouerne well, and do their duties faithfully: they all do serue God. For it is his will and commaundement which he requireth to be fulfilled of vs. Of such seruices and kindes of worship the world is full. For to euerie one in his state his workes are committed and inioyned of God, whereby he daily both ought and may serue him: that there may be left no place for excuse vnto any man, as though he were ignoraunt how, and wherefore he must serue God, neither that any seeke after other thinges, and inuent peculiar maners of seruing God, which he hath neither ordained nor commaunded, and in the meane season neglect that which he hath commaunded, as we haue hitherto done in our blindenes.

But before all other seruices and doinges of duties, he hath most highly esteemed and extolled this seruice both of them that heare, and them that preach his word: And therefore hath ordained also a speciall day thereunto euerie weeke, in which we must applie our selues to no other busines: Albeit we serue God also by other labours all the weeke, which he hath bound to no time or certaine daye. But he hath chosen this daye specially, which he hath seuerely commaunded to be kept, whereby men maye haue time and leysure to performe this seruice, lest any might flie vnto this complaint, that he hath no leysure by reason of his labours and busines. Moreouer he hath appointed speciall places also for this seruice, as among vs temples and houses, where we doe come togither. Yea he hath instituted and kept the whole order of ministers hereunto, giuing also other thinges which pertaine to the performing of the charge of this office, as the knowledge of manye tounges, and diuers giftes beside. And briefely, he hath commaunded the whole world by a certaine speciall precept, that it thinke this worship or seruice holy, and farre more excellent then the rest. Which he will haue so to be delighted in of all Christians, that it maye be manifest, howe much he doeth esteeme it, and howe acceptable vnto him the exercise and handlyng of his word is.

God hath appointed time, place, person and what so euer is requisite that his word may be preached & heard.

These things I speake to stirre you vp, and to admonish you, why ye ought willingly to heare the word of God, because it is not only the commaundement of God, whereunto we must obey, but

Most weighty causes which ought

but we haue also most ample promises, that it is a thinge acceptable to God, and the greatest worship, whereby we can doe honour vnto him. And it so farre exceedeth other kindes of worship, as the brightnes of the sunne exceedeth the brightnes of the other starres, and the Sabbath day the other dayes, & in a summe, as much as the heauenly kingdom excelleth the kingdoms of the worlde. For here all thinges are holy and specially chosen, the time, place, person, and that because of the worde, which sanctifieth all thinges vnto vs. Wherefore we must earnestly endeuour, that we take heede vnto our selues, that we fall not into sluggishnes, & slothfulnes, neither that we be caried away with contempt and lothsomnes of hearing the worde, as those delicate and cloyed spirits, which seeme vnto them selues already to be Maisters, and exactly to know all thinges, yea farre more perfectly then any can teache them. Or as others also, which are soone cloyed with it, thinking, why I haue heard this very often, wherefore should I eftsoones heare the same songe? They knowe not howe great & meruelous a thing it is, also howe great worship of God, which they do so greatly contemne, & neglect with so great slothfulnes. Wherefore they doe after vnspeakeable meanes prouoke God to wrath, hauing his commaundement so in contempt, and suffering his promise to be made voyd in them, and as much as is in them impayring and hindering by their example so commendable a worship and seruice of God.

to moue vs to heare Gods word.

But admit it to be true, which notwithstanding is not, that thou doost vnderstand all thinges perfectly, and as cunningly and skilfully as Christ him selfe: yet thou seest how earnestly he performeth the office of preaching, and applyeth him selfe vnto this worke, whereof notwithstanding he was most skilful before, and had not any whit neede thereof, as we doe greatly neede it. So Paule also a Prince of Apostles, albeit he was exceedingly well learned, & so excellent a Doctor, yet going through many countries did eftsoones and euery where preach, neither was he wearied or cloyed. Wherefore it is meete that thou be nothing at all wearie of hearing this worde, inasmuch as the ayde and helpe thereof is exceeding necessary for thee, both against the deuil and all other tentations. And although for thy instruction thou shouldest not neede it, yet oughtest thou not to be wearied or cloyed, þ thou shouldest not bestowe a fewe howres in a day euery weeke

We must not be wearie of hearing the word of God.

vpon this worship and seruice of God: seeing that before, applying thy selfe to false worship, when thou didst passe the whole day in temples, and didst runne from temple to temple, from altar to altar, thou felst no tediousnes or wearines, neither didst say as thou doost at this day: O, I haue heard no newe thinge, I haue heard these thinges before: But didst thinke thus? this day and yesterday I went to heare Masse, and to morow I mind to goe to heare it againe. How much more oughtest thou to doe this now, knowing assuredly that this is the right seruice and worship of God, & to say? Albeit I knew most perfectly, as I doe not know, yet to giue honour and shew obedience vnto God, I will doe this seruice, and because of his loue and prayse I will heare his word, that my Lord may see by this chiefe worship, wherewith I am especially delighted, that I am willing to serue him. For although no other fruite or profit come vnto me thereby, yet I may reioyce that I haue performed a most holy and acceptable worke vnto him, whereunto other kindes of worships and seruices being compared, are of small importance.

Now, he that doth not care for these thinges, neither is moued with them, reuerently to thinke and highly to esteme of the word of God, willingly and earnestly to heare and learne it, whensoeuer opportunitie and meanes shall be offered, I wil haue nothing to do with him. For neither may I, neither will I draw any man hereunto violently. He that contemneth, let him contemne still, and remaine a swine as he is, euen vntill that day, when God wil kill him, and throw him downe hedlong to hel. For such a one can not be a good man, neither is it a humane sinne, but a certaine deuilish obstinacie, so greatly to contemne that, whereunto God hath appointed a place, person, time, &c. Whereunto moreouer he moueth vs by his commaundement, louingly prouoketh vs by his promises, stirreth vs vp, and admonisheth vs by wordes, and offereth all these of his owne accorde, and to be bought with no price or treasure, which is to be farre fetched, or hardly come by, the excellencie whereof can in deede be counteruailed with no gold. Adde hereunto moreouer that it is a worship or seruice very easie to be done, which may be performed without all labour or griefe but that thou must attentiuely heare the Preacher, or apply thy mouth to speake and read, then which labour none surely is more easie. And albeit it is to be feared, that thou shalt there-

A deuilish obstinacie to contemne the hearing of Gods word.

fore

fore beare the crosse, and suffer persecution, yet the worke it selfe is so toyned with no difficultie, as no other labour is, no not euen that that is most easie. If so be that it be not grieuous vnto thee, to sit the whole day in a tauerne or an alehouse, or otherwise with thy companions to trifle and spoyt thy selfe with filthy and vnseemely gestes and pastimes, also to singe and prate, and yet art not wearie, neither feelest any labour: thou mayst with as litle paine sit in the temple, and heare the Preacher, whereby thou seruest God, and doost that which is acceptable vnto him. What wouldest thou doe, if thou shouldest at his commaundement carry stones in quarries, or goe armed on pilgrimage to S. Iames? or if some other laborious and painefull worke should be enioyned thee? as hitherto it hath bene the custom among vs, when as we would doe all thinges willingly, whatsoeuer was enioyned vs, when we were deceiued with meere trifles, and most impudent delusions.

But so doth the Deuill blinde men: in whom also he worketh a satietie and lothing of the word of God, whereby it commeth to passe that they haue no regard, what a treasure the word of God is, but liue after a beastly sort, contemning all good doctrine. Let vs therfore at the last delight in these things, thinking thus with our selues, that as often as we reade or heare the word of God either priuatly or publikely, of whom soeuer it be preached, we apply our selues to the chiefe seruice of God, which pleaseth God exceedingly well. After this sort thou mayst inflame thy selfe to heare, and God will inspire thee with his grace, that the seede of his word be not sowne in vaine, but may bring forth plentifull frute. For the word is neuer taught without frute, whensoeuer it shal be diligently and attentiuely heard, neither can it be, but that by eftsoones hearing it, thou shouldest become better. And albeit for the present time thou seest or feelest no frute, yet in processe of time thou shalt plainly perceiue & feele it. But it were long here to rehearse the frutes proceeding of the worde, nay, in deede they can not be all rehearsed.

God maketh the seede of his worde frutefull in the diligent hearers ther of.

These thinges I thought good to speake in steede of a preface before the wordes of S. Paule, to the intent to stirre vs vp more diligently to heare the worde of God: and surely there is great neede of such an exhortation daily in euery sermon, which also is much pertinent vnto the text which we presently haue in hande.

Exhortation to ỹ hearing of Gods word very needefull.

For Paule in this place reprehendeth curious spirits, which go about by their owne wisedom to be maisters of the word of God, and doe by and by falsely perswade them selues, that they knowe it well, and that they neede not any more the help of any teacher: but turne them selues to trifleling and vaine iangling, that they may bring forth some new thing, which the common sort may be desirous to heare, presuming also to be Maisters of the Scripture and of all men, labouring to teache euery one, and yet not vnderstanding what they speake, or whereof they affirme. For this is a plague and calamitie that followeth, where the word of God is not handled diligently and seriously, the learners being wearie of hearing, and the teachers slothful in preaching. Hereof it commeth that so great companies of hearers slide away, and Churches become desolate. Of which calamitie vaine talking spirits are the cause, which promise new thinges, that they may winne the hartes of the multitude vnto them selues, boasting that they are Maisters of the Scripture, and yet are alwayes such men, as are ignorant, forasmuch as they haue neuer tried, what it is to teach other: which we doe nowe plainly see, and the wrath of God is at hand ready to punish our contempt and vnthankefulnes. Therefore Paule beginneth his Epistle to his Disciple Timothe so, that he should take heede, that such teachers doe not arise, which can talke many thinges of the lawe, bringing many new questions and doctrines, what is to be done, how righteousnes is to be obtained, all which they do for ostentations sake, that they may be seene and praysed, and seeme to be more learned then other, and yet they neuer came so farre as to teach any certayne thinge, or that which might be counted to be of any importance, but doe all thinges confusedly and out of good order. Such babblers vse onely these wordes, that we must be honest, that good workes must be done, and God must be serued, &c. but they vnderstand not the sense of those wordes, what they meane. And being asked how we must doe good workes, nowe they teach this particular worke to be done, an other time an other worke, as, offer so much sacrifice at this altar, get thee into this or that Monasterie, runne vnto this Sainct, here erect a chappell to the honour of such a Sainct, in an other place founde a Masse, light tapers, eate fishe, buy indulgences, &c. Which being done, they by and by bringe an other worke, and forthwith after that an other.

Vaine & curious teachers.

So

So they know not how to instruct any after a constant & certayn maner of teaching, much lesse can they say, this is, or in this doth the summe of Christian life consist, &c. And yet in the meane season those thinges must be counted very excellent that they teach, so much doe they boast, and promise almost golden mountaynes, as though they alone were Doctors that might not be gainsayd, and controulers and Maisters of all other.

But he is to be counted an excellent Maister, and highly to be esteemed, which teacheth the chiefe point and whole summe of doctrine, to wit, how the hart and conscience, yea and the whole man must liue. They know nothing of that thing, although they be very full of wordes, but doe altogither erre from the summe & principall point of the lawe. In the meane season they intangle the mindes of ỹ hearers with such a confused company of words, that they know neither how to make a beginning nor end of speaking, and it is vncertaine whereunto that disordered companie of wordes doth serue, whereby no man can be made better, much lesse can he confirme his conscience thereby, as we hitherto haue enough and too much seene and tried in the Papacie amonge our Preachers of dreames. What therefore is the summe of that doctrine, which is to be taught to the people? Saint Paule answereth:

> The ende of the commaundement is loue out of a pure hart, and of a good conscience, and of faith vnfeyned.

This is that Helen; here thou hast the summe of Christian life most excellently and fully comprehended, compendiously and briefly vttered, and which may be not vnfitly printed in thy memorie. Thou must endeuour, if thou wilt not erre from the lawe, but attaine to the chiefe point therof (that thou mayst know what is to be done and what to be left vndone) to haue loue proceeding out of a pure hart, from a good conscience, and faith vnfeyned. If thy loue be of this sort, thē is it right, otherwise thou errest from the meaning of the whole law. Now these wordes are profound, and comprehend muche matter in them: Wherefore we must partly expound them, that they may be the better vnderstoode, & that we may accustom our selues to Pauls maner of speech. First he attributeth to loue the summe of the whole lawe, wherein it

The summe of Christian life.

What it is loue.

wholly consisteth. And to loue is nothing els (as I thinke it is knowne to all) but to fauour and embrace one from the hart, and to shewe and perfoyme vnto him all the duties of friendshyp and good will. Nowe those iangling Doctors also vse such wordes, preaching and boasting many thinges of loue, but all by peece-meale and particularly applyed to their owne trifles and follies. Euen as heretikes, wicked men, and vngracious wretches haue loue also, but that which consisteth onely amonge them selues, & them that are of the same sorte with them, in the meane season they hate and persecute all good Christians, whom they would willingly accuse of murder, if they could, &c. But this doth not yet deserue to be called true loue, if I choose one or two, whose conditions like & please me, whom I do friendly & louingly embrace, & no man beside them. It is called a particular loue, which proceedeth not out of a pure hart, but from an infected and filthie hart.

Loue flowing out of a pure hart.

For true loue floweth out of a pure hart, when I endeuour as God hath commaunded me, to poure forth my loue toward my neighbour, and to fauour all without difference, whether they be friendes or enemies, euen as our heauenly father him selfe doth, who suffereth his Sunne to arise on the good and euill, and sendeth his raine to the thankfull and vnthankfull, maketh the earth to bring forth many good thinges, giueth money, riches, fruites, cattell, and many times especially vnto them that are the worst of all other. But from whence commeth ỳ doing of these things? truely from pure loue, whereof his hart is most ful. This he poureth forth abundantly vpon all, omitting no man, whether he be good or euil, worthy or vnworthy. And this is called true, diuine, entire, and perfect loue, which loueth no one, neglecting the rest, neither cutteth or diuideth it selfe, but imbraceth all indifferently. The other is loue of theeues and Publicanes. if I loue him, which is for my turne, and may doe me a pleasure, and which esteemeth well of me, and despise him that contemneth me, and which is not on my side. For that doth not proceede from the hart which ought wholy to be good and pure, indifferently toward al, but he that is endued with such loue, seeketh his owne thinges, & is full of loue of him selfe, and not of loue toward others. Neither doth he loue any man, but for his owne commodities sake, regarding onely that, which may serue for his owne vse, seeking his owne profit by euery man, and not the profit of his neighbour. If

Loue that proceedeth not from a pure hart of what sort it is.

he

he be prayſed and honoured, he laugheth, but being looked vpon with ſower countenaunce, or an vnthankfull word being ſpoken vnto him, he ſtomacketh, curſeth & findeth fault, ſo that all friendſhip forthwith ceaſeth. Contrariwiſe he that hath a pure hart muſt be ſo affected according to the worde of God, and his example, that he fauour euery one, and beſtow liberall and friendly benefits vpon them, euen as God hath fauoured him, and of his diuine loue hath beſtowed benefits vpon him.

But ſome man will ſay, he is myne enemie, and doth euill vnto me. Surely he is an enemie alſo to God, vnto whom he doth many moe thinges diſpleaſant vnto him, then he can doe either to me or thee. But therefore my loue ought not to be extinguiſhed or ceaſſe, becauſe he is euill, and altogither vnworthy thereof. If he be euill, he ſhall at the laſt ſuffer puniſhment according to his deedes, but his wickednes muſt not ouercome me. But if I can through loue rebuke and admoniſh him, or pray for him, that he may amend, and eſcape puniſhment, I muſt do it readily: I muſt not be an enemie vnto him, or doe euill vnto him in any wiſe. For what profit ſhould redound vnto me thereby? neither am I made better thereby, and I make him ſo much the worſe. This therefore ought to delight me, if I ſhall fauour him, and beſtowe benefits vpon him, if ſo be that he will ſuffer them to be beſtowed on him, and pray vnto God for him, ſo I may enioy peace, and haue no trouble or contention with any man, and perhaps I may ſo profit him, that he wil change his life vnto the better, and amend. Otherwiſe, ſurely loue being diuided or ſeparated, I haue more bitternes and ſorrow by them, whom I hate, then I haue ioy and profit by them, whom I loue and keepe companie with. And this is ſayd to trouble the fountaine or water, from whence pure loue can not flowe. As it is certaine that the Iewes alſo did, againſt whom Paule ſpeaketh in this place: for they loued them onely of whom they were loued, whereby they defiled the ſyncerities of loue with mans affections, and therefore their hart could not be pure.

We muſt not therefore abſtaine frō doing well to any becauſe he is our enemie or euill.

But whereby is the hart purified? I anſwere, it can not be purified by any other thing better, then by that ſoueraine puritie, which is the word of God. Receiue that into thy mind, and order thy life according to the rule thereof, and thy hart is purified. As in this place, ſee thou ſet the word before thee, Thou ſhalt loue

Wherby the hart is purified.

thy neighbour as thy selfe, & follow that which it commaundeth, and by and by thou shalt see whether it purgeth & clenseth whatsoeuer desire there is in thee of thyne owne profit, or whatsoeuer loue of thy selfe. For commaunding thee to loue thy neighbour, it maketh exception of none, either friend, or foe. Albeit some man be euill, and hath bene oftentimes iniurious vnto thee, notwithstanding he doth not therefore lose this name, that he is not to be called thy neighbour, but neuertheles remaineth thy flesh and blood, and is comprehended in these wordes, thou shalt loue thy neighbour &c. Therefore I say, if thou shalt consider him and so behaue thy self toward him, as the word teacheth thee, then is thy hart made pure, and loue sincere, so that thou makest no false difference of persons, neither otherwise considerest him, then an other, which is good, and one of thy familiars. In deede we can not deny this to be true, that an honest man is more worthy to be loued, vnto whome also euery one doth more willingly applye him selfe by nature, then vnto the conuersation of wicked men, whose familiaritie there is no good man that doth not abhorre, howbeit flesh and blood is the cause that true and Christian loue is not among vs. For a Christian must not deriue his loue from the person, as the world doth: as some yong man seeing a maide, is in loue with her because of her fayrenes and beautie, and a couetous man taketh his loue and desire of his money, a Lorde or Prince of honour and power, &c. For all such loue is sayd to be feyned and proceeding not from whence it ought, cleauing to the good thinges, wherewith he seeth the person adorned, neither doth it continue any longer, then that which he loueth, continueth, and as long as he may enioy it.

True loue. But true loue ought to be such as floweth out of a continuall fountaine, and proceedeth from the bottom of the hart, as a fresh and continuall water alwayes springing forth, which can not be stopped, and is neuer dryed vp. This loue sayth after this sort: I loue thee, not for thy honestie or dishonestie, for I doe not deriue my loue from thy honestie, as from a strange fountaine, but out of myne owne fountaine, that is, out of the word of God which is planted in my hart, which commaundeth me to loue my neighbour. From hence loue plentifully floweth, open to all which haue neede thereof, watering all both friendes and foes: yea chiefly prepared and ready for foes, inasmuch as they haue more neede, that

that they may by my meanes be brought to amendement, I praying for them, and doing according to my abilitie that which I am able, that they also leauing their euill wayes, may be deliuered from sinnes, and the snares of the Deuill. And this is sayd to be loue flowing from the hart, and not deriued from without: for he that is endued with such loue, findeth no such thinge in him whom he loueth, from whence he should derive it: But because he is a Christian, because he layeth hold on the word, which is altogether pure by it selfe, by the power of it his hart also is made pure, and replenished with true loue. Whereupon he poureth forth the treasures of his loue toward euery man, neyther is he moued or turned awaye with the person of any, whether he be good or euill. Behold, thus should they preach, which will rightly teach loue required of the lawe, whereof our bablers knowe nothing, neither haue any regard thereof, albeit they talke many thinges of the lawe, and dispute much of loue. They doe not see, no they doe not so much as once thinke, that loue must be such, that it flow out of the hart, & that the fountaine must be first pure and cleare. This neuer descendeth into their hart, although they heare, read, and teach many things of it. They are occupied with very vncertayne, and vnprofitable cogitations, yea rather with dead dreames.

Wherefore whatsoeuer is preached of workes and of a good life, that onely is well done which proceedeth from the worde of God, a pure hart, and a true faith. This thou mayst see in all states, how euery one ought in his calling to doe the office inioyned him, and exercise the workes of loue. A seruaunt labouring, & thinking no more then thus: My Lorde or Maister payeth me my wages, for which onely I serue him, otherwise I would not vouchsafe to looke vpon him, &c: hath not a pure hart, for he doth not serue, but for a peece of bread, or for his hyre, which being taken away, his seruice also ceaseth. But if he were a right & true Christian, he would rather be thus affected: I will not therefore serue, because my Maister payeth me wages, because he is honest or vnhonest, &c: but therefore, because the word of God doth thus speake vnto me: Seruaunts be obedient vnto your Masters as vnto Christ, &c. This seruice proceedeth of it owne accord out of the hart, which layeth hold on the word and greatly esteemeth it, saying: I wil serue my Maister, and take my wages,

True good workes.

How a good seruaunt ought to be affected.

Ephes. 6. 5.

but this shal be the chiefest thing, for which I do this seruice, that I may serue my God and Lord Iesus Christ, who hath layd the condition and state of a seruaunt vpon me, which I knowe doth please him in me, &c. Here thou seest a true worke proceeding out of a pure hart. So also let a Lord or Prince, and they which haue the charge of gouerning ỹ common weale, thinke thus: God hath committed vnto me the office of a Magistrate, that I should be a ruler: now if I will haue regard vnto this onely, that I may enioy my dignitie, riches, and power, it is certaine that my hart is not pure, and yet in the meane season I doe the works of a ruler, so, that the world can not complaine of me, neither Cesar, or the Lawyers can blame or finde fault with me by their lawes. Euen as neither a seruant seruing onely for wages can be reprehended of the world, whether he seeketh his owne thinges or not. Surely the worde of God is not regarded in the office of a ruler that doth so, but his owne idoll, his owne glorie, money and power &c.

How ỹ hart of a godly Magistrate ought to be affected.

But if this affection be in his hart: because I am occupied in this office, whereinto God hath placed me, and the word commaundeth him that beareth rule to be carefull, it is meete that I doe execute the same with all faithfulnes and diligence, to the praise and glory of my God: The execution of the office of such a ruler endued with such a mind, commeth out of a pure and sincere hart, wherewith both God and good men are delighted. There is moreouer in him loue, which doth not cleaue to ỹ person or outward things, but beginneth in the hart, which the worde of God maketh manifest, which forasmuch as it is pure & cleane, doth also purifie the hart. And so his gouernment and works are the meere seruices of God, & most acceptable sacrifices vnto him, seeing that they are done onely according to the word of God, and for God his sake. But our talkers can not teach this, neither are able to iudge of it, only crying out when they teach best of all, that we must be honest. They bring a certaine iuridiciall sermon out of the lawes of men, as Cesar and his Clerkes teach. But how the hart is purified, they haue neuer so much as vnderstoode or thought any thing thereof, or how loue is to be deriued to all states and conditions of men according to the word of God.

Thus must thou say moreouer euen in spiritual offices & states also: If I or any other shall preache to get some good benefice, whereas otherwise I would easily ceasse from doing this office,

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I may preache the Gospell, but my hart is not pure, but most plainly polluted. Therefore although I doe longe and much affirme, that it is a good worke and a weighty office, yet doe I not performe it aright, forasmuch as I doe it not from the hart. But then onely it is rightly done when the hart hath this affection: albeit I must get my liuing thereby, yet this ought not to be the chiefe ende thereof, but because God hath called me vnto it, and hath committed it vnto me diligently to be done, it remaineth, that I doe with all diligence labour therein to the glory of God, and saluation of soules, which I doe otherwise also for the loue of the word, willingly and from my hart. Hereby I seeke neyther loue or friendship, nor honours, nor thankefulnes of men, but my workes come from the hart, which I first doe, before I obtayne any honour, glorie, reward, money, or fauour, although if those come and followe, I may haue and receiue them without sinne.

How y hart of a true Preacher & Minister ought to be affected.

Lo, thus the word is the cause, foundation, ground, fountayne and springe of loue comming out of the hart, & of all good workes that please God, which he can by no meanes away with, if the hart be not pure before: for neither are workes acceptable to men, which are done without the hart by dissimulation. Nowe if Cesar and men require the hart, although they can not see it, of howe muche greater estimation is that hart before God, which doeth all thinges for the wordes sake? Therefore he also suffereth his word to be preached, that we may order all our life according to the prescription thereof. And let not vs suffer our selues to be hindered, fraped from it, or discouraged with the let or hinderance of any thinge, although for it we shall suffer all kinde of losses, vnthankefulnes, contempt, &c: but let vs breake and goe through all brunts with a boulde and manly courage, and say thus: we beganne nothinge for any mans sake, neither will we leaue of any thinge because of any man, but that we may doe that which is acceptable to God, we will goe on still, howsoeuer thinges fall out with vs. They which doe thus, become men excellent and most highly to be esteemed, who are ready to doe all duties, and serue God with all readines of minde and loue not feyned. For the fountaine and springe is good, not deriued and brought in from without.

God requireth the hart.

These thinges I thought good briefly to speake of the first

part.howe the hart is purified by the worde alone, and not as the Munkes haue dreamed,by a fight taken vpon them against euill cogitations,& by feyning of good thoughts. For what thoughts soeuer thou shalt feyne, the hart shal remain vncleane, if the word of God be not in it,although it pretende a great shewe of a godly life,as Paule witnesseth.But this purenes,wherof he speaketh, doth extend farther then outward & corporal purenes doth,which the Iewes did vse,eating & drinking their hands being often washed,which our religious men also vse in their fasting, diuersitie of apparel, orders and rites,&c: for this is called purenes of the spirit,which we then haue,when being instructed by the word of God,we know thereby how he is to be serued in euery state & calling,and endeuour to frame our liues according thereunto.

The second part.

Nowe followeth the seconde parte concerning a good conscience, whereof also we must intreate, to wit, that loue must come from such a hart,as hath a ioyful & quiet conscience, both toward God,and also toward men. Toward men so,as Paule glorieth of him selfe, that he liued so, that he offended no man, troubled no man,was an euill example and burden to no man, but all that did see and heare him,must needes witnes, that he indifferently serued all,helped all,counselled all, & delt friendly and gently with all.Such a conscience Moses also glorieth of against ỳ seditious, Numb.16: Thou knowest that I haue not taken so much as an asse from them,neither haue I hurt any of them. And Ieremie chap.18: Remember,O Lorde, how that I stood before thee to speake good for them, and to turne away thy wrath from them. Likewise doth Samuel 1.King.12: I haue walked before you from my childhood vnto this day: beholde here I am beare record of me before the Lord, & before his anointed: whose oxe haue I taken? or whose asse haue I taken? whome haue I done wrong to? whom haue I hurt? or of whose hand haue I receiued any brybe?and so forth as followeth in the same place.Such boasting & glory euery Christian must attaine vnto,that he do so liue toward euery man,and so exercise and shew his loue,that no man can worthely complaine any whit of him,whereby he shal trouble or dismay his conscience,but that all that wil confes ỳ truth,may be enforced to say,that he hath so liued, ỳ he hath bin an example to euery man of liuing wel,which will onely but follow him.And this is called a good cõscience before men, or against ỳ cõplaints

A good and quiet conscience toward men.

and

and reprehensions of men. And albeit such a conscience is not able to stand before the iudgement of God, no nor any pureness of the hart in the outward life and works of loue (we continuing in sinning often times before God) yet we must attaine vnto such a hart, that we may comfort our selues before him also, and say: this God hath bidden and commaunded to be done, therfore I do it with a pure hart and a good conscience, neither would I willingly doe otherwise, neither of purpose hurt or trouble any man, but whatsoeuer I say and doe, that is willed and commaunded of God. Let no Christian suffer such a confidence to be wrested from him, that he may boast him selfe by the worde of God against the whole world. For he that hath no regard how he leadeth his life, that he may stoppe the mouthes of all blamers and accusers, and cleare him selfe before all, and testifie that he hath liued, spoken, and done well, he I say is not yet a Christian, hauing not in him selfe a pure hart and loue. For we wil not presume of the doctrine of faith, as though that being had, euery man may doe what he list, whether it be profitable or vnprofitable to his neighbour, that we must in no case doe. Otherwise that doctrine should haue the name to giue licence and free libertie for euery one to doe what he will. But we must so behaue our selues, that we may obtaine loue out of a pure hart and a good conscience, that no man may accuse vs of any crime.

And although these thinges be spoken of our life and works, and a Christian is an other maner of man before God, as we shall heare, yet we must earnestly endeuour our selues in this also, that we may be without blame before God. And when we shall not attayne thereunto, we must flie to prayer, and say before God and men: forgiue vs our trespasses, &c: that at the least wise, our life may remayne without blame, and we may obtaine a good conscience before mē. And if this can not be brought to passe by perfect loue and pureness of the hart, yet let it be done by humilitie, that we may prayse for, and desire of all men pardon of our offences, when as we haue not purely and perfectly done our dutie, or are not able to doe it, so that thy neighbour may be enforced to say, albeit thou hast greatly hurt me, or hast not done thy dutie toward me, as it was meete, yet forasmuch as thou humblest thy selfe, I will willingly forgiue thee, and take it in the best parte. And for this humilities sake

What we must doe when we fayle in our dutie toward our neighbour.

I say that thou art a good man, which dooſt not ſtande obſtinately, as though thou wouldeſt aduiſedly and of purpoſe offende againſt me, but dooſt turne thy ſelfe vnto loue. Therefore that life is as yet ſayde to be without blame, which albeit it was ſubiect to reprehenſion, is with humilitie couered, and reformed, that no man can worthely complayne thereof. Thus the lawe ſhould be expounded and handeled, that both loue toward euery man may rightly proceede out of a pure hart for God his ſake, and the conſcience may ſtande before the world. And this ought to haue bene practiſed of thoſe vayne talkers in their Sermons, their colde trifles and vaine follies being neglected and left of. But that all theſe thinges may ſtande and be of force before God alſo, there yet remaineth one thinge, which pertayneth hereunto, which is that that followeth.

And of faith vnfeyned.

For as I haue ſayde, albeit I haue a good conſcience before men, and doe exerciſe loue out of a pure hart, yet the olde Adam, that is, fleſh and blood remaine in me ſubiect to ſinnes, whereby it commeth to paſſe that I am not altogither holy and pure. And as Paule ſayth Gal. 5: The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, &c. And Rom. 7. he affirmeth that he muſt fight a daily fight againſt him ſelf, becauſe he can not do that which is good, & yet he would willingly do it. The ſpirit in deed would very willingly liue purely & perfectly according to the worde of God, but the rebellious fleſh reſiſteth the deſire thereof, aſſailing vs with many and great tentations, that we ſhould ſeeke honour, wealth, riches, pleaſure, & ſhould become ſlothful & negligent in our ſtate & duty. So there remaineth a continual fight in vs, becauſe of the vnpurenes of our perſon, wherein there is not yet ſincere purenes, nor a good conſcience & perfect loue, vnles there be perhaps ſomewhat before men. But before God many thinges are found lacking in vs, many things are worthy of blame, although all things be perfect before men. For examples ſake: although Dauid can obtayne that confidence before men, that he can be reprehended of no man, and the holy Prophets Eſay, Jeremie, &c. do glory & are ſure, whatſoeuer they haue done according to their dutie, is right and well done, ſeeing it is the word and commaundement of God, wherein they haue exerciſed them ſelues with a pure hart & a good conſcience, yet can they not ſtande by this confidence before the iudge-

Our olde Adam doth hinder vs that we can not attaine to perfect puritie and holines.

Although we haue a good conſcience, and do exerciſe loue out of a pure hart before men, yet the ſame can not ſtand before God.

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ment of God, but are compelled to say: if we should strive with thee in iudgement, then no man shall haue so good a conscience or so pure a hart, which doth not dread thy iudgement, and acknowledge him selfe to be worthy of reprehension and blame. For God hath reserued that prerogatiue vnto him selfe, that he may contend in iudgement with euery one, albeit he be holy, and accuse him of deadly sinne: neither is there any so holy, whom he may not iudge and condemne as worthy of destruction. Wherefore although both the hart be pure & the conscience good before men, yet must thou endeuour to attaine vnto this also, that the same may be likewise good before God, that he may not find fault with them, but that they may be safe and quiet from his iudgement, as they are before men.

Hereunto now pertayneth the thirde parte, that is faith. And this is the principall part and chiefe precept, contayning all the rest in it, that we may knowe, that where loue is not yet perfect, the hart not sufficiently pure, and the conscience not quiet, and God doth yet finde some thinge which is worthy blame, where the worlde can finde fault with nothinge, faith must moreouer come, and such a faith, which is not fayned, and defiled with confidence of a mans owne holines. For wheresoeuer this is not, there the hart is neuer purified before God, neither shall the conscience be able to stande, if they be examined by seuere iudgement, and exact censure. Men in deede shall not iustly blame me, albeit I glory, that I haue serued them by preaching, helping, gouerning, and by doing the dutie of an ouerseer or ruler, &c: with all faithfulnes. And if I haue done any thing more or lesse then I ought, I am sorie at my hart, for I would very willingly haue done all thinges that I ought. Wherefore I am quiet & already excused, neither haue they any more, which they may rightly require of me, but are enforced to acquite and discharge me. But here I must attayne vnto this also, that my hart be so pure, and my conscience so good before God, that he may not by any meanes accuse and condemne me. Howbeit we finde not this in our selues, although we may glorie somewhat thereof before the worlde. I must therefore obtayne some other thing whereunto I may truste, if I shall come into perill, and within the throwing of the dart, as it is commonly sayd, and I must say to my feareful and terrified conscience, I haue done that which I haue bene a-

The third part.

We can not of our selues attaine to a pure hart & a good conscience before God.

ble, and who knoweth how often I haue done lesse then I ought? for I coulde not see and marke all thinges, as Dauid also sayth Psal. 19: VVho can vnderstand his faltes? Therefore I can lay no foundation of truste vpon my owne holines and purenes. Wel, I haue the worde, so liue, loue, and haue a good conscience, which is pure and holy. But this I want, that I can not conclude, that that is in my hart, neither doe I finde so good a conscience in me, as the lawe requireth of me. For there is no man liuing in the earth, which can say this truely, I knowe that I haue done all thinges, and that I doe owe nothinge before God. But the most holy ones must say thus: I haue done surely according to my abilitie that which I haue bene able; but I haue offended muche ofter then I knowe. Wherefore our owne conscience doth witnes against vs, accusing and conuincing vs, although before the worlde we are most free from reprehension or blame. For it must followe the worde which sayth: this thou shouldest haue done, this thou shouldest haue left vndone. It can not auoyde the iudgement of this, nor aunswere to the accusation thereof, but is at the least wise enforced to stande in an vncertaintie, being wholy wrapped in douting. But if it dout, then is it by and by conuinced: for it standeth not before God, but flieth and trembleth.

By what meanes we attaine to such purenes and a good conscience as can stand before God.

Wherefore the principal part of our doctrine must here helpe vs, to wit, that our Lord Iesus Christ being sent of the father, did come into the worlde and hath suffered and died for vs. Whereby he hath reconciled the good will and fauour of the father to vs, his wrath being appeased, and doth nowe sitte at the right hande of the father, hauing regarde of vs as our Sauiour, and as a continuall Mediatour and Intercessour for vs, making intercession for vs, as for them which can not haue and obtayne of themselues such purenes and a good conscience. Therefore by his helpe and benefite we may saye before God: although I am not pure, neyther haue a good conscience, yet I cleaue to him by faith, which hath perfect purenes and a good conscience, which he gageth for me, or rather which he giueth vnto me. For he alone is he, of whome we reade written, as Peter, and Esaie chapt. 53 saye: vvho did no sinne, neyther vvas there guile founde in his mouthe. And this prayse belongeth onely vnto him, neyther hath he any neede to praye, forgiue vs our dettes,

neither

neither of that article of the Creede, I beleeue the forgiuenes of sinnes, &c: but he is free and quiet in perpetuall, pure and perfect righteousnes and purenes, vnto whose charge none can lay any thing, nor accuse his conscience of any crime, not man, not the deuell, no not God himselfe: for he himselfe is God, who himselfe can not accuse himselfe.

And this is called faith neither coloured nor fained, which, the conscience striuing and trembling, dareth come forth in the sight of God, and say: Almightie God, I am innocent before the world and quiet in minde, so that noe man can lay any thing to my charge, or fynde fault with me. For albeit I haue not done all things, yet I aske pardō of euerie one, that he will forgiue me for God his sake, euē as I againe forgiue all. By this meanes I haue cut of the complaints of all, who haue no more which they may rightly lay against me. But before thee I must lay aside this trust and confidence, and must wholy acknowledge the guiltines of innumerable synnes, and say as Dauid sayd Psal. 143: Lord enter not into iudgemēt with thy seruaunt: for in thy sight shall no man liuing be iustified. Wherefore I can not contend with thee, if thou requirest an account of my life. But I appeale from ỹ iudgemēt seat to the mercy seat, I do easily suffer, that I be dealt with according to law & right before the iudgemēt seat of the world, and I will willingly aunswere, and will do what I am able: Howbeit before thee I will not come into iudgement, but I desire grace, which I take holde of on euerie side. For thus the Scripture teacheth me, that God hath set two seates before men: the one a iudgement seat, for them which are yet secure and vntractable, & acknowledge not their sinnes, neither wil confesse and acknowledge them: the other a mercy seate, for miserable & fearfull consciences, which feele their sinnes, dread the iudgement of God, and do earnestly make request for grace. And this mercy seat is Christ himselfe, as Paul witnesseth Rom. 3. whom God hath set forth vnto vs, that we might haue refuge vnto him, being not able to stand before God by our owne power. Unto him I wil applie my selfe, if I haue done or do lesse thē is meete: and how great purenes and goodnes soeuer my heart and conscience haue before men, I will haue it here to be altogither nothing, and hidden, and couered as it were with a baut, yea with a fayre heauen, which may mightely defend it, which is called

We must appeale frō the iudgement seat to the mercy seat.

The iudgement seat.

The mercy seat.

grace and remissiō of synnes. Under the defence thereof my heart and conscience must creepe, and remayne safe and quiet. For so he commaunded his Apostles to preach & publish, that through his name all that beleeue in him, shal receiue remission of synnes. Againe, He that shall beleeue and be baptized, shalbe saued. And Joh. 3. he saith: God so loued the world, that he hath giuen his onely begotten Sonne, that who soeuer beleeueth in him, should not perish, but haue euerlasting life. Therefore God hath set forth the mercy seat vnto vs, whereunto he leadeth vs from the iudgement seat. Let vs leaue other before the iudgemēt seat, namely those proud holy ones, contemners and persecuters of the word of God, where they shall heare sentence according to their deedes. We will suffer these to abyde in their circle, vntill they haue humbled themselues: but we will not abyde in this circle, but will depart from it as farre as we shalbe able, into the circle of the mercy seat, vnto which we do appeale. Neither haue we inuented this of our owne braine, but it is the word of God himselfe, which threatneth horrible iudgement to them, which come with their owne holines, and trusting thereunto, do hope that they shalbe able to stand before God the iudge, neglecting the mercy seat of Christ. For the sentence standeth, that they shalbe set before the iudgement seat, as Christ sayth Joh. 3: He that beleeueth not is condemned alreadie, because he hath not beleeued in the name of that onely begotten Sonne of God. He that beleeueth in him is not condemned, that is, shall not come to the iudgement seat, but to the mercy seat, where there is no wrath or rigour, but grace & forgiuenes of synnes, all thinges being remitted which be not pure, yea being blotted out and so consumed, as a droppe of water is consumed of the heat of the sunne. For where the mercy seat reigneth, there is nothing els, but meere forgeuenes and remission of synnes.

This therefore being knowne, we must exactly vnderstād the difference betweene the Lawe and the Gospel, whereof we often teach. The lawe draweth vs to the iudgement seat, requiring of vs integritie of life, loue out of a pure heart & a good conscience, it maketh vs also to exercise our selues therein, and must goe no further. But when it shall come and accuse thee, and will reason with thee, and haue those things to be performed which it requireth, then shalt thou be greatly troubled. For albeit thou hast done

The office of the Lawe.

done them, yet art thou not able to stād before God, before whose iudgement seat, many thinges are yet found wanting in thee, which should haue bin done of thee, and thou hast left them vndone, neither are they knowne vnto thy selfe. Whither then wilt thou turne thee? Here the Lawe vrgeth thee by all meanes, and thine owne conscience being witnes, accuseth thee, requiring the sentence of the iudge against thee. Then must thou despeire, there is no counsell or helpe to be had, except thou knowest to flie from the iudgemēt seat to the mercy seat, as for example: Admit some Bishop die in his owne holines, who while he liued was as it seemed, of a good life, and acknowledged Christ no otherwise then a cruell iudge (as it hath bin hitherto preached of him, neither hath he bin otherwise set forth, as he is also wont to be vnto such, not of his owne nature, for in deede he is most gracious and comfortable, but because they esteeme him for no other in their heart) behold this man is a hinderaunce vnto himselfe, that he can not obtaine any grace. For he knoweth no difference of the iudgement seat and the mercy seat, yea he is altogether ignorant, whether there be a mercy seat, from which he so erreth, and must be bound to the iudgement seate.

The Law wil driue vs vnto desperation, vnles we can appeale frō ỹ iudgement seate to the mercy seate.

But we teach thus, that Christ is so to be learned and considered, that we be most certainly perswaded that he sitteth before miserable and trembling consciences, that beleeue in him, not as an angrie iudge, which commaundeth forthwith to carie violently them that be giltie vnto punishment, but as a gentle, louing, and comfortable Mediatour, betweene my fearefull conscience and God, which sayth vnto me: If thou be a sinner, and astonied, and the deuell laboureth to drawe thee to the iudgement seat, then see that thou flie vnto me, and feare no wrath or anger. Wherefore? Euen because I sit here, that, if thou beleeue in me, I may make intercession for thee to my father, that no anger and seueritie may hurt thee: for all anger and punishment shalbe sooner layde vpon me, then be borne of thee. Howbeit that can not be: for he is the onely beloued sonne, in whom all grace and fauour dwelleth, whom as often as the father doth behold, he can not but replenish both heauen and earth with grace and fauour, and forget all wrath and displeasure. And what soeuer he shall aske of his father, that he shall forthwith obtaine without all repulse or denial. So by faith we are made wholy blessed and

How Christ must be learned and considered of.

safe, subiect no more to any damnation, yet not for our owne holines and purenes, but for Christes sake, to whom we cleaue by faith as to our mercy seate, being assuredly perswaded, that with him there remaineth no anger, but meere loue, and pardon and forgiuenes of synnes. Thus the heart is purified before God, and the conscience made good and quiet, not in respect had of mine owne purenes or life led before the world, but by trust and confidence of that excellent treasure, which my heart apprehendeth, which is vnto me in steede of a pledge and fulnes, when as before God I am not able to paye.

We must especially take heede, that our faith be not false or feyned.

But herein the whole force of the matter consisteth, that we do againe and againe take heede, that our faith be not false, or as Paul speaketh, fained. For if this erre, and deceiue vs, all things deceiue vs. For there haue bin many in all ages, as there be also at this day, which can speake many thinges of faith, and wilbe maisters not onely of the law, but euen of the Gospell also. Who say the same that we do, that faith perfourmeth & doth all things, but that the Law and good workes are also to be ioyned vnto it, and that otherwise, if these be not added, faith auaileth nothing. In which words they mixe & mingle togither our life & workes, and Christ. But this is not purely and syncerely to haue taught faith, but to haue coloured, defiled and corrupted faith, so that it can no more be called faith, but a feined colour & counterfecting of faith, the trust and confidence of the heart standing not purely toward Christ, as the onely mercy seate, but being grounded vpon our one holines, as being able to stand before the iudgemēt seat. Wherefore doing thus, we are most rightly cast of before God, and condemned vnto destruction whereof we are most worthie. For if faith must be pure and voyd of all counterfecting and fayning, then these two thinges, Christ and my workes must be rightly discerned and seuered one from the other. For this is plaine euen to him that is blinde, that Christ and his workes are not my life and my workes, but are separated from the Law and from the workes of all men, yea and that by a greater distaunce, then man is vnlike or differeth from man. For neither can I say, that I and Cesar or the Bishop of Rome are the same thing, yet I am much neerer and liker vnto either of them, then a mortall man and a sinner is vnto Christ the Lord, whoe is not onely a pure and holy man, free from all spot and blot, but is moreouer

God

God also. Therefore let the Lawe and the purenes of thy heart, yea and thy good conscience auaile in earth onely toward men: But where the mercy seat is, to wit at the right hand of the father, and the Mediatour betweene thee & God, thither no mans workes & merits ought to haue accesse, much lesse be they there of any force or value. Wherefore Christ is purely to be separated from all my life, deedes and workes, and we must without exception conclude, that he is an other thing then our life led before men with a pure heart and a good conscience, albeit it be led euen perfectly and without blame. For it being presented before God, and by the lawe brought to the iudgement seat, I am condemned and lost. But Christ is the mercy seat, and all that cleaue vnto him by faith, can not be condemned and iudged. So the iudgement seat together with the lawe and all my life goe into one part: but my faith must flie and lep farre vnto an other part, and ioyne it selfe vnto him which is pure, and hath no synne, of whom the Scripture speaketh: he that beleeueth in him shal not be confounded. Because he is present in the sight of the father, and maketh intercession for me. Moreouer he giueth me his owne purenes and holines, that being clothed and adorned therewith, I may be able to stand before God, and all wrath and displeasure may be taken away, in steede whereof I may enioy meere loue and fauour.

Loe, thus faith remaineth pure and free from counterfecting, for it resteth not vpon my workes, that because of them it should behoue God to be gentle and fauourable vnto me, as a false and fained faith doth, which mingleth together mans merits and the grace of God, and although it hold the words of Christ, yet hath it the confidence and trust of the heart reposed in it selfe, so, that it is certaine, that it is onely a colour which can not long continue. For the matter commeth at the last to this point, that beleeuing that God is fauourable vnto thee because of thy life led without fault or blame, thou must despeire and say: Who knoweth what I haue done? whereby am I certaine that I haue neglected nothing through carelesnes, or that nothing is wanting in me? In this doutfulnes of minde the foundation faileth, sliding away vnder thee like vnto sand moued or stirred, and so faith is of no force or value at all. Wherefore it is not vnfitly called fained and painted faith, through which one seeth as it were through a

A fained faith is no sure foundation, but faileth thē that trust vnto it.

lattis or painted glasse, through which the thinge that is seene representeth the colour of the glasse, and yet is not in deede of that colour. So they also beleeue that that affection is in God, that he vouchsaueth to regard our workes and merits. Which they paint forth according to their owne opinion and dreames, which are vtterly false, rash and vnadvised. And so iudgeing God & all things according to them, they see only as it were through a lattis or painted glasse. But so onely thou shalt behold him with pure and cleere eyes, if thou do wel separate the iudgement seat and the mercy seat one from the other, that heauen with the starres thereof may remaine pure to grace & remission of synnes obtained by the Mediatour, where Christ reigneth with his workes, and the earth also with her trees and herbes, whither we must be referred with our workes. The matter I say must be brought of vs to that passe, if we will stand with a right and an vnfained faith before God, that we do purely distinguish and seuer our selues, our life, and Christ or the mercy seat: and he that will not do this, but presenteth himselfe before the iudgement seat with a bold courage, shall feele the reward of his rashnes. I my selfe haue bin in that daunger, and as it were a mouse hauing tasted pitch haue runne away, reioysing greatly that libertie was giuen me to attaine to the mercy seat, and now I am enforced to say, that albeit I haue liued very well before men, yet all things cõmitted of me contrariwise, do remaine beneath vnder the iudgement seat, to be punished according to the sentence and iudgement of God. Now I haue no other comfort, nor no other helpe and counsell of my saluation, then that Christ is my mercy seat, who hath neuer offended, hath defiled himselfe with no synne, who died and rose againe for me, and sitteth now at the right hand of the father, & defendeth me vnder his shadow and protection, that I neede not doute, that I am by his benefite and intercession safe before God from all wrath and terrour of iudgement. Thus faith remaineth in all thinges pure, setting no other thing before it selfe, whereunto it may boldly trust, but Christ alone.

Only Christ is our cõfort and meanes whereby we attaine saluation.

Now he that knew this well, should be a man of a resolute minde. For all other haue to do with a fained faith, boasting many thinges of faith, but mingling all thinges together, like as vintners mixe wine with water, by this that they say, if thou liue thus,

thus, God wilbe fauourable vnto thee, and they make the iudgement seat of the mercy seat, and the mercy seat of the iudgement seat, which by no meanes can be, for the iudgement seat shall remaine, &c. Wherefore separate these two one from the other as farre as thou shalt be able, that they come not togither, namely, thy life and holines togither with the iudgement seat into one place, which may driue & enforce thee to haue a good conscience, and to lead an vpright life before men. But offer thy synnes to the mercy seate to be transferred into an other place, where God louingly receiuing thee, will embrace thee as a beloued sonne, and will neuer remember more any wrath or synnes. If such doctrine of faith were set forth vnto men, then should it be excellently well done, and all other thinges should follow of their owne accord, as purenes of heart and goodnes of conscience, through right and perfect loue. For who soeuer is by faith quiet in his heart, and assured that he hath God fauourable vnto him, who is not angry with him, albeit he hath deserued his wrath diuers wayes, he doth all thinges with a glad and cherefull minde. Moreouer he liueth so also toward men, that he is louing and beneficiall toward all, although they be not worthie of loue. He is quiet toward God through Christ the Mediatour, who will not throw him downe hedlong into hell, but doth louingly fauour him, and lifteth him vp into heauē. And this is the chiefe quietnes, and principall point and foundation of our saluation. Afterwardes he doth in his life shew himselfe dutyfull also toward his neighbour, doing all the best thinges he is able vnto him, what soeuer his state or dutie commaundeth or requireth. And when he doth lesse then is meete, he asketh pardon of his negligence before God and men, so that there is left occasion neither to him, nor to the world afterward to rebuke him, power also to deuoure him is taken from hell, & to teare him in peeces, from the deuell. Thus a man is saide to be in all things perfect, toward men by loue, and toward God not by the lawe, but by Christ, whom he apprehendeth by his faith, as the mercy seat: Which gageth his holines for the beleeuers, or rather giueth it to them, so, that in him they haue all thinges that are necessary to saluation. How we become perfect.

Now this is right and pure doctrine, which should be exercised, and taught vnto men distinctly, that they might know how

they may be able to stand both before God and men, that faith and loue be not mingled together, or life referred both to God and men. This ought to haue bin perfourmed of those glorious and arrogant teachers, seeing that they wilbe counted maisters of the law, that the difference of the law and faith might be well knowen vnto all. For although it be taught and repeted with neuer so great diligence; yet notwithstanding it is very hard to be wel and throughly learned, especially to vs which haue bin instructed and trained vp in the doctrine of workes, and led onely to the lawe and our owne workes. To these may be added our nature also, verie prone and ready vp it selfe hereunto, and now brought into a custome, whereby it is confirmed, and in continuaunce of time turneth the heart also into exercise and vse, so, that we can not abstaine, nor thinke otherwise, but, that God wilbe fauourable vnto vs, which haue done so great workes, and haue led our life so without blame or fault. Therefore we must striue against both our nature & custome. For surely it is a very hard thing to thinke or be perswaded otherwise, and so purely to put a difference betweene faith and loue, the filth still hanging vpon vs and cleauing vnto vs, albeit we be now in faith, so that our heart can scarce rule it selfe, that it say not: so long time haue I taught the Gospell, so haue I liued, such great workes haue I done, &c. And we would very willingly haue God to regard our life, and turne his mercy seat for our cause into a iudgement seat. Thou mayst vse this boasting toward men, I haue done well to all as I haue bin able, and if any thing be wanting, I as yet wil endeuour to make a recompense. But if thou be minded to go vnto God, I aduise thee to cease from such arrogant boasting, and thinke to appeale from iudgement to grace.

Very hard to learne ỹ true doctrine of faith.

Let who will begin and proue this thing, he shall at length see and trie, how grieuous and heard it is, for a man that hath bin occupied all his lifetime in the workes of his owne holines, to escape out, and with all his heart by faith to cleaue to this one Mediatour. I my selfe haue now preached the Gospell almost twentie yeares, and haue bin exercised in the same daily by reading & writing, so that I may wel seeme to be ryd of this wicked opinion. Notwithstanding I yet now and then feele the same old filth to cleaue to my heart, whereby it commeth to passe that I would willingly so haue to do with God, that I might bring some

A hard thing to trust nothing to our owne workes and holines.

some thing with my selfe, because of which he should for my holines sake giue me his grace. And I can scarce be brought to commit my selfe with all confidence to meere grace, which I should doe: for we ought to flie onely to the mercie seate, forasmuch as God hath set it before vs for a sanctuarie, which must be the refuge of all them that shalbe saued. Wherefore it is not to be mercled at, if it be grieuous vnto others, so purely to apprehend and lay holde of faith: but especially to such as be yet hindered and entangled of deuelish preachers, of whom Paul speaketh, which crie out against the doctrine of faith, and in these wordes vrge the workes of the Lawe, Doe this and thou shalt liue: Also, if thou wilt enter into life, keepe the commaundements, &c. Which in deede are true and right, if thou didst also rightly vnderstand them. Declare vnto me the true meaning of these wordes, otherwise I know sufficiently already, that I ought to be righteous and keepe the commaundements. But how must I attaine hereunto? or what is it to be righteous? If thou saiest that it is, to haue a good conscience and a pure heart, and to doe all thinges, that God hath commaunded: Well, be it so, but heare ye then, goe to, performe me that, or at least shew one, that dareth say that he hath performed it. For thou shalt not yet so purifie my heart and conscience with thy doctrine, that God can not accuse and condemne me. But now the Lawe (as it hath bin sufficiently declared) requireth such a heart, as hath a good conscience before God. How therefore do we obtaine such a conscience? This is the question and the cause, whereof the controuersie is. Truly it commeth not hereof, because thou teachest the iudgement seate, that is, the Lawe, but from hence, for that we haue a pure and vnfained faith, which layeth holde of Christ, in whom it most fully obtaineth all thinges which the Lawe requireth. So at length all thinges are brought to passe in me hauing a good conscience, inasmuch as I am now made righteous and iustified before God. For although that many things be as yet found wanting in me, yet he standeth on my side, who hath so much righteousnes, as wherewith he is able to supplie both mine and all mens defects.

How we obtaine a good conscience.

Thus we shew the way whereby we are made righteous before God, when as they, when they teach best of all, shew onely the waye to attaine to honestie and righteousnes which is of

Teachers & vrgers of the Lawe.

force and value before men, contending that it ought to be of force before God also, mingling together all thinges in one, inasmuch as they haue no certaine knowledge thereof, vnderstanding not what they say or what they affirme. For, to what ende tendeth this thy immoderate cry? He that will enter into life, let him keepe the commaundements, &c. in which wordes thou shalt not shew the way to attaine righteousnes: for descend a litle into thy selfe, and examine thy selfe diligently, then shalt thou fynde thy selfe to haue bin in time past conceiued and borne in synnes, and to liue in the same nowe, and not to be able to performe that which the lawe requireth. Why therefore doest thou seduce other with vaine wordes, saying? be thou righteous and thou shalt be saued, which is to no purpose, neither followeth there any frute thereof, the waye being not shewed by which we attaine to iustification? I heare the wordes well, what things the lawe requireth, but how shall we attaine vnto abilitie to fulfill them? Then speakest thou to me againe and saiest, thou must doe good workes. But how shall I stand before the iudgement of God, if I haue long and much wrought good workes, and am righteous before men, as thou teachest me? howe shall I be certaine, that I seeme such a one to God also? For here my hearte and conscience be ready to witnes the contrarie against me.

True doctrin concerning Christian righteousnes

Howbeit I should haue bin thus taught of thee, as Paul commonly teacheth, that righteousnes must proceede from faith vnfayned, and before all thinges the mercy seate must be layd hold of, from whence all thinges that are wanting in vs are to be taken. And so in deede these wordes, keepe the commaundements of God, are rightly vnderstood. For the lawe requireth perfect righteousnes in thee, being of force as well before God as before men: thou hauing obtained this, goe forth into the companie and assembly of men, and exercise loue, and doe good workes. By this order and meanes something is brought to passe, and such sayinges of the Scripture are fulfilled. For so man doth that which the lawe requireth, first before God, not by his owne strength or vertues, but by Christ, without whom we can doe nothing before God, and secondly by his owne endeuour before men. And he is now perfectly righteous, inwardly by faith in Christ, and outwardly also by his workes, yet so, that

How a Christian is perfectly righteous.

that there is place amõg men for mutuall pardoning of offences. Therefore the righteousnes of Christians doth much more consist in forgiueing, then in their owne workes. Those vaine prates doe peruert the order of this doctrine, and without preaching of forgiuenes, doe teache that workes onely are to be vrged.

Loe, thus Sainct Paul reprehendeth the errour and ignoraunce of them, which speake much of the lawe, and repete it in daily sermons, and yet they themselues doe not vnderstand or shew the waye, how the lawe must be fulfilled, knowing nothing so wel as to babble forth and often to repete these wordes, that the lawe, the commaundements are to be kept, if thou wilt be saued, good workes must be done, &c. As they do at this daye fill all bookes with such confusion of wordes, and in all their sermons vtter nothing els, then such vaine babbling, which they themselues vnderstand not. But they neuer saye worde of those thinges whereof Paul here speaketh, namely of the summe of Christian doctrine, how loue must flowe out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith vnfayned, they say no more, but keepe the commaundements. They leueling at the true marke do neuer hit it: therefore they corrupt and fulfille all thinges, loue, the heart, the conscience &c. For the head of the fountaine is wanting, that is, syncere fayth, which if it be not right and sound, all thinges must needes be corrupt, which shall flow and proceede from it. And what soeuer they teach, it is a conceit of their owne imagination, and like to delusions, not vnlike also to those thinges, that are seene through a lattis or glasse, which resemble the colour of the cleere glasse, and yet in deede are not of that colour. They thinke that God will regard them, when they liue so before men, as it seemeth good to their obscure opinion. But if God were of that opinion, he might then haue well kept still Christ and the Gospell. For what neede or necessitie should moue him, to send Christ from heauen, who should purchase that vnto vs with his precious blood, which we our selues haue before with vs? He surely should be the foolishest of all men, which would poure forth a precious treasure, which no man needeth. Vaine teachers.

Thus thou seest how these men teach their owne dreames, whereof they themselues know or haue tried no certainty, nei-

ther doe any thing els but fill men with errours, being not able to declare, how that which they teach is to be attained vnto. They draw men vnto workes, whereby they confirme them in their olde nature and custome, out of which they were to be drawen. These truly are grieuous and odious men, and not vnworthely verie sharpely accused and reprehended of Paul: and it appeareth that they were of no small authoritie and estimation, seeing that he pronounceth of them, that they were called and would be counted doctours of the Lawe, and farre greater and worthier then the Apostles themselues.

Wherefore we must endeuour to lay vp and print this text euen in the bottom of our heart: for it is excellently well ordered, and is pure and perfect doctrine, teaching how we must be righteous before God and men, as the Lawe requireth, that these three maye be as it were conioined in vs, namely, a pure heart, a good conscience, and fayth vnfayned: and that our life may flow out of all these, and be occupied and led in them: then haue we attained, and fulfilled the meaning of the Lawe. Howbeit we must most diligently take heede, and endeuour to draw Christ vnto the Lawe, who is the ende and fullfilling of the Lawe, and our righteousnes and fulnes before God, which we fynde not in our selues, and without fayth shall neuer fynde, albeit the Lawe be taught and often repeted without vnderstanding and knowledge. And these thinges maye suffize to haue bin spoken at this present for the exposition of this place.

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A

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, OF THE QVESTION OF THE PHARISEES, AND aunſwere of Chriſt concerning giuing tribute to Ceſar.

Matth. 22.

Verſe 15. THen went the Phariſees, & tooke counſell howe they might tangle him in talke.

16. And they ſent vnto him their diſciples with the Herodians, ſaying: Maiſter, we know that thou art true, and teacheſt the waye of God truly, neither careſt for any man: for thou conſidereſt not the perſone of men.

17. Tell vs therefore, how thinkeſt thou? Is it lawfull to giue tribute vnto Ceſar or not?

18. But Ieſus perceyued their wickednes and ſaid: Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?

19. Shew me the tribute mony. And they brought him a penie.

20. And he ſaid vnto them: Whoſe is this image and ſuperſcription?

21. They ſaid vnto him, Ceſars, Then ſaid he vnto them: Giue therefore to Ceſar the thinges which are Ceſars, and giue vnto God, thoſe thinges which are Gods.

22. And when they heard it, they merueiled, and left him, and went their waye.

Mans wisedom & reason is not able to preuaile against the wisedom of God.

IN this text is set forth vnto vs, how subtil reason and mans wisedome agree with the wisedome of God, and how fouly reason stumbleth, when it striueth to be euen most subtil and wise, as it here falleth out with the Pharisees, who notwithstanding were the best and most wise of the Iewes, which euen by this their subtiltie they declare: neuertheles their wisedome is here proued to be foolishnes. They could blame Christ neither for his preaching nor for his workes, and yet would they willingly haue had occasion to put him to death, wherefore they thought to set vpon him most craftely and wilely, propounding a subtil question vnto him, the subtiltie whereof was such, that mans reason was not able to comprehend it, then which also a subtiller could not be inuented: and thus they speake vnto him:

The subtill question of the Pharisees propounded vnto Christ.

Maister, we know that thou art true, and teacheſt the waye of God truly, neither careſt for any man: for thou considereſt not the persone of men. Tell vs therefore, how thinkeſt thou? Is it lawfull to giue tribute vnto Cesar or not. Here thinke they, we shal entrappe him. For he shalbe compelled to aunswere that tribute is either to be giuen, or not to be giuen. If he affirme that it is to be giuen, we haue ouercome him: but if he denie that it is to be giuen, then is he giltie of death. Whereas they say, Maister, they will thereby moue him, and as it were constraine him to aunswere the truth. But whereas they say, We know that thou art true, they do thereby put him in minde of his duty. Whither therefore should Christ turne himselfe? for there seemeth to be no way for him to escape, yet he would not for all that fall into their net. Was not this a subtil questiō? Do they not shew themselues to haue bin sufficient craftie and wily ones? for which way soeuer the Lord had aunswered, he had bin taken. Was not this done also full warely and circumspectly? for they associate to themselues the ministers of Herode, thinking no other but to entrappe him with deceit, that he should not by any means escape, thus casting in their mindes: Now we will meete with him well enough, if he denie that tribute is to be giuen, the Herodians are present, which shall forthwith put him to death as a seditious felow, and one that resisteth the Romane Empire. But if he affirme that tribute is to be giuen, he speaketh against the libertie of the Iewes, then will we stirre vp the people against him. For

the

the Iewish people would be free, and haue their king of their owne stocke, euen as it was promised them both of Moses and God, that their kingdome should continue vntill the time of the true king, that is, of Christ. Euen as the Patriarch did prophecie thereof: The scepter shal not depart from Iuda and a lawgiuer from betweene his feete, vntil Silo come. And therefore God did choose this people specially to himselfe, and made a kingdom of them, onely for Christes cause. Moreouer there were many sentences in the Scripture which declared that they should serue none, For they should be the chiefest and not the lowest, &c. This and such like sayings the Scribes had beaten into the peoples heads, wherewith they were greatly disturbed: euen as at this day it is put into the peoples minde, that the Church cannot erre. Hereupon the Pharisees thought thus: If he affirme that tribute must be giuen, he blasphemeth God, he shalbe giltie of death, as one iniurious to God, and then shalbe stoned of the people. For God hath graunted and promised libertie vnto this people, and they were all euen in the middest of captiuitie the people of God. Howbeit at that time they wanted a king, as they do at this day. Wherefore diuers tumults, seditions, & vprores were stirred vp among them. For they were taught by the lawe, that they should haue a king of their own flesh and stocke, as it is said before, wherefore they did vncessantly striue against straunge kings and gouernments, vntill not a few of them at times were beaten & slaine. Neither did this happen seldom times, for they were a stiffenecked, obstinate, and vnruly nation, & therefore the Romaines which at that time did beare rule ouer them, did verie circumspectly gouerne them, and diuided the land into foure charges of gouernment, that being on euerie side kept in awe by the gouerners and presidents, they might not so soone flocke together and moue sedition, and that they might also be more easily resisted if at any time they should rise against the Romane Empire. Wherefore Pilate was appointed of the Romains lieftenant of Iudea, Herode Tetrarch of Galile, his brother Philip Tetrarch of Iturea, and of the countrie of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the Tetrarch of Abilene, as Luke rehearseth them. And all this was done that they might keepe the Iewes vnder, whereupon the Iewes were inflamed with anger, and in a rage and furie, but specially in the time of Christ

Gen. 49 10.

Deut. 28. 13.

they would willingly haue had a king.

The subtill imaginations of the Pharisees against Christ.

Wherefore the Pharisees hauing found out this deuise, thought thus with themselues: Well, we haue the matter now at a good stay. The Romanes chalenge to themselues the gouernmēt, now if he answere vnto the question that tribute is not to be giuen, the lieftenant is at hand and ready to put him to death: if he answere that it must be giuen, he shall stirre vp the people against himselfe, and so we shall assuredly by this meanes entrappe him: thus they supposed that either they should fynde cause of death in the Lord, or at the least make his doctrine to be nothing set by of the people. As the Iewes here do, so also do we, the chiefe and necessarie thinges being left, we are occupied about other matters not necessarie. The Pharisees here moue a question, whether they be free or otherwise: forasmuch as they had the Lawe and the word of God, they supposed that they ought to be subiect to none, but to their owne Kinge, yet they were now compelled to obey Cesar Emperour of Rome. They had Scripture concerning the loue of God and their neighbour, but that being left, they are occupied about other matters. It was promised vnto them, if they obeyed the precepts and commaundements of God, that they should then be a free people, they disobey and neglect Gods commaundements, and yet notwithstanding they wil be free, and haue their owne king. In like maner falleth it out with vs, we earnestly chalenge to our selues Christian liberty, and yet we thinke, that if we doe those thinges that seeme good in our owne braine and fantasie, we are thereby Christians, both faith and charitie being of vs neglected. But what doth Christ, the Pharisees so subtilly setting vpon him? he striketh them with their owne sword, and entrappeth them in their owne deuise, whereby they thought to haue entrapped him, answering neither of those thinges which they hoped he would, as the Euangelist doth more at large describe, saying:

But Iesus perceiued their wickednes & said: VVhy tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute mony. And they brought him a peny. And he said vnto thē: VVhose is this image & superscriptiō? They said vnto him, Cesars. Here thou plainly seest the wisedom & meruelous dexteritie of Christ, he willeth the tribute money to be shewed vnto him, and asketh of the image and superscription therof. They answering that it is Cesars, he very well

The wisdom of Christ in confounding the craft and subtilty of the Pharisees

and

and most freely inferreth, that they are vnder Cesar, vnto whom they were compelled to pay tribute. As if he sayd: If ye haue so let in Cesar, that his money is coyned with you, surely he beareth rule ouer you, as though he should say: It is come to passe through your owne fault that Cesar ruleth ouer you. What should they say or doe vnto this question? They merueiled and went their wayes, they thought that they should notably haue ouercome him, but for all their subtiltie and wisedom they were deceiued.

This is written for our comfort, that we which are Christians may know that we haue such wisedom, as exceedeth all wisedom, such strength and righteousnes, as whereunto no strength & righteousnes of man is like. For against the holy Ghost there is no counsell: this power and strength we obtaine through Christ, that we may tread sinne vnder foote, and triumph ouer death. When Christ dwelleth in vs by faith, we haue him which bringeth to passe such thinges, howbeit they are not throughly felt but in time of tentation. Wherefore when I stand in neede, he is present, and giueth vnto me strength, that I may courageously passe through. We must not therefore be afraide that our doctrine shall perish and be put to ignominie and shame. For let all the wise men of the world rise against the worde of God, yea and be neuer so circumspect, and set themselues against it, yet shall they haue the foyle and be ouercome. It may be that they barke and bite, so that it seemeth vnto men, as though they would destroy the Gospell, but when they haue set themselues against it to extinguish it, they shall no whit preuaile, but in the snare that they haue layd for others, they themselues shall at length be taken. As we see here in this text, and commonly in Paule, but specially in the history of S. Steuen, where we read how vainely his aduersaries vsed ỳ Scriptures, yea those that they vsed were against them selues. For the Iewes did accuse Steuen, that he had spoken both against the temple, and against God which commaunded the temple to be builded, bringing & alleaging Scriptures, whereby they thought to conuince and condemne him. But Steuen being full of the holy Ghost, shewed them in order out of the Scripture, how that God dwelleth not in tẽples made with handes: Dauid would haue built him an house, but God refused it. What was the cause hereof? A long time before Dauid was

The wisdom & strength of Christians

borne, God dwelt among his people. He surely should be a miserable God which should neede a house. And so he confirmeth by many histories that God doth not dwell in houses or temples made with handes. What should the Iewes doe here? they did manifestly acknowledge their owne Scripture, which they had brought against Steuen. So all they shall be put to shame and ouerthrowne, which set themselues against the wisedom & worde of God.

The wisedō & power of ỹ world shall neuer be able to extinguish or suppresse the Gospell.

Wherefore let no man be afraide, albeit all the wisedom and power of the world striue against the Gospell, although it would extinguish it euen by sheding of blood. For the more blood that is shed, so much more is the number of Christians increased. The blood of Christians sayth Tertullian, is seede whereof Christians growe. Satan must be drowned in the blood of Christians. Wherefore it is not violence and force that is able to suppresse the Gospell: for it is like vnto a palme tree, which hath this nature and qualitie, that albeit a weight be layd vpon it, yet it alwayes riseth and lifteth vp it selfe against the weight. Such a nature also hath the Gospell, for the more it is striuen against, so much more are the rootes thereof spred abroade, and the more mightely that it is oppressed, by so much doth it more and more grow and increase. Wherefore there is no cause that we should be afraid of power, but rather that we should feare prosperitie & merie dayes, which are able to hurt vs more then anguish & persecution. Neither let vs be afraid of the subtiltie and wisedom of the world, for they can not hurt vs, yea the more that they striue against the truth, so much more pure & cleare is the truth made. Nothing therefore can come better to the Gospel, then when the world with his force and wisedom setteth it selfe against it. The more behemently sinne and Satan doe fight against my conscience, so much stronger is my righteousnes made. For if sinnes do vrge and disquiet me, I doe then more ardently pray and cry vnto God, and so my faith is more and more increased and strengthned. This is that which S. Paule meaneth when he saith: Power is made perfect through weakenes. Forasmuch therefore as we haue so great a treasure, which is increased and strengthned by persecutions and aduersitie, there is no cause that we should be afraid, but rather that we should with a cheerefull mind reioyce in tribulation, as S. Paule sayth Rom. 5. according as the Apo-

Not persecution and trouble, but too much prosperitie is to be feared of Christians

2. Cor. 12. 9.

stles

tles did, who with great ioy departing from the councells, gaue God thankes, that they were counted worthy to suffer rebuke for the name of Iesus. *Act. 5. 41.*

If the deuill were endued with such wisedom, that he would be quiet, and suffer the Gospell to haue free course, he should not suffer so much losse. For when the Gospell is not impugned, it is as it were wasted with rust, neither hath it occasion to shew forth the vertue and power thereof. We liue therefore here secure as yet, for no man striueth against vs, wherefore we continue still as we were before, yea (alas) we become worse and worse. Whereas some of our aduersaries haue set vpon vs by writing, that pertaineth to a few. For inasmuch as they haue written against vs, they haue thereby done nothing els, but as it were blowen the fire, but if we had bene thrown into the fire, or slayne with the sworde, the number of Christians would be greater amonge vs. Wherefore this is a comfort vnto vs, if we at any time be tempted, that Christ is ready to helpe vs, & reigneth among vs, yea he is so neare vnto vs, that alwaies through him we may ouercome, as long as we beleeue and trust in him: Howbeit when we are touched with no aduersitie, he doth litle or nothing, but when we are fought against and oppressed, he is present, and bringeth all our enemies to confusion. The comfort of Christians in tentation.

We haue moreouer to learne here that they which are wise & mightier then other, which are endued with the chiefe giftes of vnderstanding and nature more then other, which excell in greater industrie, learning and readier capacitie then other, which are fit to ouersee other, and can gouerne all thinges best, that they I say, doe many times most of all other resist God and faith, & trust more to their owne strength and reason then to God. For they are caried so farre by their venimous nature, that they neither can nor will vse those things to the commoditie and profit of their neighbour: but trusting to their owne giftes and abilitie, they hope that now they shall obtaine this, now that, neither doe they thinke that they shall haue neede of Gods helpe also thereunto: As it appeareth here in the Pharisees and Scribes, who were certaine, as they supposed, that if they so set vpon the Lorde, it could not be, but that they should then entangle him. For it is vnpossible, thought they, that he should here escape vs, we shal here hold him as it were faine into a net, whether he affirme or deny The most wise & mighty of the world doe oftentimes striue most against God.

that tribute must be giuen. Marke moreouer how subtle and peruerse ỹ wit of mans nature is, which is here very liuely set forth. There is nothing els in man but wickednes, delusion, guile, deceits, lying, fraude, and all kind of euill, yea of nature man is but lyes and vanitie as the 116 Psalme sayth. We must not trust any man in any thinge, doe not perswade thy selfe, that any man speaketh the truth vnto thee, for whatsoeuer man speaketh it is a lye. Why so? The fountaine or spring head, that is, the hart is not sincere, wherfore neither can the riuers be pure. And for this cause the Lord doth commonly call men the generation of vipers and broode of serpents. Is not this a goodly title of man?

The nature of man vntill he be regenerate by ỹ spirit of God is wholy corrupt and vnpure.

Let any man nowe goe, and glory of his owne righteousnes, strength or free will. Before the world in deede some man may be, and gloriously appeare goodly, righteous, and holy, but there is nothing els, but a generation of vipers and broode of serpents, and that especially in those that seeme most excellent, most pretious, most wise, & of greatest vnderstanding. If thou go through euen all the histories of the Greekes, Iewes, & Romanes, thou shalt find the best and wisest Princes of all, which haue gouerned the affayres of their Empire prosperously, thou shalt find them I say to haue thought nothing of God, but onely trusting to themselues, to haue acknowledged nothinge as receiued from God. Hereupon it is gathered, that the lesse a man excelleth in wisedom before the world, so much lesse doth he commit against God. For they that excell in counsell and authoritie before the sight of the world, doe for the most part deceiue and lye more then others. thinking, that if they deale by delusions and deceit, their fraude & iniquitie is not perceiued: for they can after a pretty sorte cloke their craft and subtiltie. But the holy Ghost hath a most cleare & bright sight, which they can not auoyde, but they shall be espied. The Scripture doth often times call such, lyons, wolues, beares, swine, and cruell beastes, inasmuch as they rage, and deuoure and consume all thinges with their fraude and deceit. Wherefore in the old Testament the Iewes were forbidden to eate of certaine beastes, as of those already rehearsed, and of others, for this one cause especially, that it should be a type and example to vs, wherby we might perceiue, that there are some mē, which are strong, mighty, rich, witty, learned, & kilfull, and wise, which are to be auoyded and eschewed as a certaine vncleane thing, and as such as seduce

seduce and deceiue others with their fayre shew, might, and wisedom. For neither shall they be counted for such, neither will any man thinke them to be such, as doe so much as thinke any euill in their hart, much lesse doe it. Wherefore thou must put no trust & confidence in any man, trust not vnto him, for he will deceiue thee wherein soeuer he is able Againe if thou trustest man, thou art against God, in whom thou puttest not thy trust. It is written in the 17 chapter of Jeremie: Cursed be the man that putteth his trust in man, and, Blessed is the man that putteth his trust in the Lord.

Some man may now say: How shall we doe then? One man must haue dealing with an other, otherwise howe can the life of man continue? We must buy, we must sell, we must vtter and chaunge our wares with men: Now if one should not trust an other, the whole trade of mans affaires should be in perill, yea and perish. I say that no man can deny, but that there must be mutual dealings among men, and that one doth neede the helpe and trauell of an other. But this I will haue, that whatsoeuer dealing thou hast with men, either in buying or selling, thou count it for a thinge vncertaine, which thou must neither trust, nor build vpon it. For this is certaine, as soone as thou shalt trust to man, he will seeke to deceiue thee, forasmuch as the nature of man, as it is of it selfe, can doe nothing but lye and deceiue. Yea all thinges in man are vncertaine, both his worke and words, there is nothing in him, but lightnes and vnconstancie, which thou mayst boldly beleeue to be true. Wherefore all our hope and confidence must be reposed in God alone, and after this sort we must say: Lorde, giue thou me grace that I may direct & order my life, my soule, my body, my substance and goods, and whatsoeuer is mine, according to thy diuine will, for I beleeue in thee, I trust in thee, doe not thou forsake me in so perilous dealing with this or that man: I put no trust in man. If thou knowest that it is good for me, make him to deale faithfully with me: if thou knowest that it will be to my hinderance and hurt, helpe me to auoid it, for thy will onely pleaseth me, which I wish alwayes to be done.

An obiectiō

The aunswer

We must put all our hope and trust in God onely.

As soone as thou thinkest in thy mind: He is a good man, and one that wil keepe his promise, I am sure that he wil not deceiue me, but wil deale faithfully, euen then hast thou fallen from God, and worshipped an idoll, putting thy trust in a lyar. Wherefore

when thou hast any dealing with man, thinke boldly: If he deale faithfully, it is well, if he doe otherwise, in the name of God, let him goe, I will commit all thinges to the will of God, he shall prosperously bring them to passe. Of such a false and vngodly confidence reposed in men, that euill crept in among Christians, namely the worshipping of Sainctes, whereby the Christian Church, that is, the true congregation of the faithfull, hath suffered exceeding great hurt and incomparable ruine. For what other was the seruice and worshipping of Sainctes but a deuilish thing? When as men vsed to reason after this sorte: This man was very holy, that which he taught, he did, whom we wil follow, and doe the like. Hierome, Augustine, Gregorie sayd this, therefore is it true, & therefore will I beleeue it. Frauncis, Benedict, Dominicke, Bartholomewe liued thus, they did this and that, I will imitate their life and workes. Moreouer Augustine was saued by this rule, wherefore I also shall be saued by it. Fy, howe vnstable and miserable a thinge is this, they are onely lyes and dreames of men, there is not in one word mention made here of Christ and his word, but they are onely the vaine inuentions and trifles of men. I would vtterly breake the rule of Augustine, if he therefore ordayned it, thinking to be saued thereby. So blind and without vnderstanding is reason, that it receiueth the dotages & vaine inuentions of men, when as notwithstanding the worde of God onely is to be receiued in matters of saluation, as if Herod, Pilate, Caiphas, & Hannas should preach the Gospell, I ought to receiue it. Againe, if those that are counted holy, should rise and preach lyes, also rules, habits, shauings, ceremonies, and such like vaine inuentions of men, I ought in no wise to receiue them, for we must here haue respect, not to the persons, but to that which they preach.

How ỹ worshipping of Saincts crept in amonge Christians.

Doost thou presume to be wiser then all the fathers & saincts, then all the Bishops and Princes of the whole worlde? Thus may some man obiect against me. Farre be that from me. For I doe not contend to be wiser then they. But this without controuersie is thus, that whatsoeuer is wise, great, liberall, mighty & strong before the world, doth seldom or neuer agree with ỹ word of God. For so it falleth out, that they that are such doe for the most part persecute the Gospel, and if they were not so great, the Gospell should not so greatly shine forth and triumphe. The Ro-

mane

mane Emperours Hadrian, Traian, Diocletian were the moſt wiſe Ceſars of all, whoſe gouernment was ſo liked of, that it was prayſed of the whole worlde, yet they perſecuted the Goſpell, and could not abide the truth. The ſame we find written of the Kings of the Iewes, as of Achas and others, which gouerned their kingdom very well, yet deſpiſed the word of God and diſobeyed his commaundements. We in our time had neuer ſuch Emperours or Princes, as are comparable to them. But it ought to be verified in theſe, that God would by fooliſh preaching confound the wiſedom of this worlde, as Paule ſayth 1. Cor. 1. All theſe thinges are ſhewed vnto vs in this text which we haue in hand, which hath a ſimple and a ſclender ſhewe and appearance of it ſelfe, but yet containeth many thinges in it moſt worthy the noting. Now how the Lord concluded with the Phariſees, when they had ſhewed him the tribute money, and had aunſwered that it was Ceſars image and ſuperſcription, the Euangeliſt declareth, ſaying:

Giue therefore to Ceſar the things which are Ceſars, and giue vnto God thoſe things which are Gods. Although they had deſerued no ſuch thing of the Lorde, neuertheles he teacheth them the right way. And in theſe wordes he confirmeth the ſword and office of the Magiſtrate: they hoped that he would condemne & reſiſt him, but he doth nothing leſſe, for he commendeth and prayſeth him, commaunding that they giue vnto him thoſe thinges that are his. Whereby he plainly will haue, that there be Magiſtrates, Princes, and Rulers, vnder whoſe gouernment we muſt liue. Neither muſt we care whether they vſe and exerciſe their rule and authoritie well or ill, we muſt haue regard onely to their power and office, for their power & authoritie is good inaſmuch as it is ordained & inſtituted of God. Neither is there any cauſe why thou ſhouldeſt find fault with power, if at any time thou be oppreſſed by Princes and tyrannes: for whereas they abuſe the power giuen vnto them of God, they ſhall ſurely be compelled to giue an account thereof. The abuſe of a thing doth not make that thing euill, which is in it ſelfe good. A chayne of golde is good, neither is it therefore made worſe, for that a harlot weareth it about her neck, or if one ſhould put out myne eye with it, ſhould I finde fault in the chayne therefore? In like maner the power of the Prince muſt be borne, for if he abuſe his office, he is not to be

The ſword and office of the Magiſtrate confirmed by Chriſt.

A ſimilitude.

counted of me as noe Prince, neither belongeth it vnto me to reuenge or punish it in him. I must obey him for God his cause only, for he representeth the place of God. How grieuous thinges soeuer therefore Magistrates shall exact, I must for God his cause beare them all, and obey them, so farre as they be not contrary to Gods commaundements. If they doe iustly or vniustly, it shall in due time appeare. Wherefore if thy substance, life and body, and whatsoeuer thou hast should be taken from thee by the Magistrates, thou mayst say thus: I willingly yeeld them vnto you, and acknowledge you for Rulers ouer me, I will obey you, but whether ye vse your power and authoritie well or ill, see you to that.

What things must be giuen vnto God, & what vnto Cesar.

Moreouer whereas Christ sayth: Giue vnto Cesar the things that are Cesars, and vnto God those thinges that are Gods. We must vnderstand that vnto God pertaineth honour, we must acknowledge him for the liuing, omnipotent, and wise God, and ascribe vnto him what good thing soeuer can be named. And albeit we doe not giue him this honour, he notwithstanding easily keepeth it, for nothing is either added to, or taken from him by our honouring. Howbeit in vs he is true, omnipotent, and wise, when as we count him so, and beleeue that he is such a one, as he sufferreth him selfe to be sayd to be. Nowe vnto Cesar and the Magistrate feare, custome, tribute, obedience, &c: are due. God requireth especially the hart, the Magistrate the body and goods, ouer which he executeth his office in ꝑ place of God, which S. Paule doth most notably in plaine and manifest wordes declare Rom. 13: Let euery soule be subiect vnto the higher powers: for there is no power but of God: and the powers that be, are ordained of God. VVhosoeuer therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall receiue to them selues condemnation. For Magistrates are not to be feared for good workes, but for euill. VVilt thou then be without feare of the power? doe well: so shalt thou haue prayse of the same. For he is the Minister of God for thy wealth, but if thou doe euill, feare: for hē beareth not the sword for nought: for he is the minister of God to take vengeance on him that doth euill. VVherfore ye must be subiect, not because of wrath onely, but also for conscience sake. For, for this cause ye pay also tribute: for they are Gods Ministers, applying them selues for the same thinge.

Giue

Giue to all men therefore their dutie: tribute, to vvhom ye ovve tribute: cuſtome, to vvhom cuſtome: feare, to vvhom feare: honour, to vvhom ye ovve honour. And therefore alſo are Magiſtrats ordayned of God, that they may defende & maintaine publike peace, which alone exceedeth all worldly good thinges: we felt a litle in the laſt cõmotion of the common people, what loſſe, miſerie, calamitie and grieuous ſorrow conſpiracie and ſedition bringeth in the world. God graunt that it may ſo continue, that we trie it no more. Thus much ſhall ſuffize to haue bene ſpoken for the expoſition of this text.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, TEACHING THAT SALVATION COMMETH by Chriſt alone.

Ioh. 6.

Verſe 44. NO man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him: & I will rayſe him vp at the laſt day.

45. It is written in the Prophets: And they ſhall be all taught of God. Euery man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, commeth vnto me.

46. Not that any man hath ſeene the Father, ſaue he which is of God, he hath ſeene the Father.

47. Verely, verely I ſay vnto you, He that beleueth in me, hath euerlaſting life.

48. I am the bread of life.

49. Your fathers did eate Manna in the wildernes, and are dead.

50. This is that bread which cõmeth downe from heauen, that he which eateth of it, shoulde not die.

51. I am that liuing breade which came downe from heauen: if any man eate of this bread, he shall liue for euer: and the breade that I will giue, is my flesh, which I will giue for the life of the world.

The summe of this text.

1 *Christ is knowne of none, but of him whom the Father draweth, that is, except the Father teache vs that knowledge inwardly in the hart. Therefore Christ sayth to Peter Matth. 16:* Flesh and blood hath not reuealed it vnto thee, but my Father which is in heauen.

2 *Christ is the wisedom of God, which is of more price then precious stones, and whatsoeuer can be wished, is not to be compared vnto it, as Salomon sayth in the Prouerbs.*

Pro. 8. 11.

3 *The old heauenly bread, that is, the righteousnes of the lawe doth not iustifie: But Christ, if we beleeue in him, iustifieth for euer.*

The exposition of the text.

THis text teacheth vs nothing els but christian faith, and stirreth it vp in vs, as surely Iohn through his Gospel, doth almost no other thing but instruct vs, how we must beleeue in the Lord Christ. And such a faith as is grounded on the true promise of God made vnto vs in Christ, shall saue vs, as this text plainly declareth. Also they are here all proued fooles, which haue taught vs an other way and meanes to obtaine righteousnes. Whatsoeuer mãs minde cã inuẽt, although it be holy, although it haue a fayre shew before men, it must needes vtterly fal, if that he wil haue saluation to come thereby. For albeit that man is exercised with the duties of godlines, he shall not be able to attaine vnto heauen, vn-

Onely faith in Christ saueth vs.

les

les God preuent him with his word, which may offer his diuine grace vnto him, and lighten his hart, that he may walke in the right way. Now this way is the Lord Iesus Christ, he that will seeke an other way, as the most part of men with their outward workes commonly doe, hath now erred from the right and high way. For Paule sayth Gal. 2: If righteousnes be by the law, that is, by the workes of the lawe, then Christ died without a cause. Therefore I saye, that a man must by the Gospell be as it were bruised and broken, & humbled euen from the bottom of his hart, as being fraile & weake, which can moue neither hands nor feete, but onely lyeth prostrate and cryeth: Helpe me O omnipotent God, merciful Father, I am not able to helpe my selfe: Helpe O Lord Christ, myne owne helpe is nothing. That so against this corner stone which is Christ al may be broken, as he saith of him selfe in Luke, when he asked the Pharisees and Scribes: VVhat meaneth this then that is written: The stone that the builders refused, that is made the head of the corner? VVhosoeuer shall fall vpon that stone, shall be broken: & on whomsoeuer it shall fall, it wil grinde him to pouder. Wherefore either let vs fal vpon it by our imbecillitie and weakenes, by denying our selues, & so be broken, or els he will breake vs for euer in his straite iudgement. But it is better that we fall vpon it, then that it fall vpon vs. Upon this foundation Christ sayth here in this text. Christ the right way. *Luke* 20. 17.

No man can come vnto me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him: and I will rayse him vp at the last day. Now he whom the Father drayeth not, shall surely perish. It is also concluded that he which commeth not to this sonne, shall be damned for euer. He is the onely Sonne giuen vnto vs, which may saue vs, without him there is no saluation: if he helpe not, our case is most miserable: Of him Peter also speaketh to the same effect in the Acts of the Apostles chap. 4: This is the stone cast aside of you builders, which is become the head of the corner, neither is there saluation in any other: for amonge men there is giuen none other name vnder heauen, whereby vve must be saued. Whither would our Diuines and Scholemen turne them selues here, which haue taught vs that by many workes we must attaine vnto righteousnes? Here is that high Maister Aristotle confounded, who hath taught vs, that reason endeuoureth to doe the best things, & is alwayes ready to the better. But this Christ Without Christ there is no saluation.

doth here deny: for vnles the Father possesse and drawe vs, we shall perish for euer. Here all men must confesse their imbecillity and slownes to good thinges. If so be that any perswade him self that he is able to doe any good thing by his owne strength, truely he hath reproued Christ of falshood, and with great arrogancie presumeth to come to heauen, albeit he is not drawn of ỳ Father. Wherefore where the word of God is in his course, & soundly preached, whatsoeuer thinges are high and great, it casteth them downe, it maketh all mountaines euen with the valleies, and ouerthroweth all hilles, as the Prophet Esai sayth, that all harts hearing the worde may despeire of them selues, otherwise they can not come vnto Christ. The workes of God are such, that while they kill, they make aliue, while they condemne, they saue:

1. Sam. 2. 6. as Hanna the mother of Samuel singeth of the Lord: The Lord killeth, and maketh aliue, bringeth dovvne to the graue, & fetcheth vp againe. The Lord maketh poore, & maketh rich, bringeth lovv, and heaueth vp on hie. Wherefore if a man be thus striken of God in his hart, that he acknowledgeth him selfe such a one as ought for his sinnes to be condemned, he surely is euen that very man, whom God by his word hath striken, and by this stroke hath fastened vpon him the bond of his diuine grace, wherby he draweth him, that he may prouide for his soule, & haue care of him. He could first find with him selfe no helpe nor counsel, neither did he wish for any, but now he hath found the speciall consolation & promise of God, which is after this sort: He that asketh receiueth, he that seeketh findeth, & to him that knocketh it is opened. By such a promise man is more & more lifted vp in mind, & conceiueth a greater trust and confidence in God. For as soone as he heareth that this is the worke of God alone, he desireth of God, as at the hand of his mercifull father, that he will vouchsafe to drawe him. If so be that he be drawne of God vnto Christ, vndoutedly that also shall come vnto him, whereof the Lord maketh mention here, namely that he wil raise him vp at the last day. For he layeth hold on the word of God, & trusteth in God, whereby he hath a certaine testimony, that he is he, whom God hath drawne:

1. Ioh. 5. 10. As John sayth in his first Epistle: He that beleeueth in that Sonne of God hath the vvitnes in him selfe. Hereupon it must needes follow, that he is taught of God, and in verity now knoweth God to be no other, but a helper, a comforter, and a Sauiour.

How the Father draweth vs vnto Christ.

Hereby

Hereby it is now manifest, that if we beleeue, God will be no other toward vs but a Sauiour, helper, and giuer of all felicitie, who requireth and asketh nothing of vs, but will onely giue and offer vnto vs, as he him self sayth vnto Israel Psal. 81: I am God thy Lord, which brought thee out of the land of Ægypt: open thy mouth wide, & I will fill it. Who would not loue such a God, which sheweth him self so gentle and louing vnto vs, and offereth so readily his grace and goodnes?

They shall not be able to escape the seuere and eternall iudgement of God, which do vnadui sedly neglect so great grace, as the Epistle to the Hebrues sayth: If they that transgressed the lawe of Moses, escaped not vnpunished, but dyed without mercy, howe much more grieuously shal God punish them, which coūt ẏ blood of the Testament as an vnholy thinge, and tread vnder foote the sonne of God? O howe diligent is Paule in all his Epistles to teach how the knowledge of God may rightly be conceiued? O how often doth he wish encrease in the knowledge of God? As if he would say: If ye onely knew and vnderstood what God is, ye should then be safe. Then ye would loue him, and do all thinges ẏ are approued of him. Thus he sayth Colos. 1: VVe cease not to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be fulfilled with knowledge of his will, in all wisedom, & spiritual vnderstanding: that ye might walke vvorthy of the Lord, & please him in all things, being fruteful in al good works, & increasing in the knowledge of God, strēgthened with al might through his glorious power, vnto all patience, & long suffering with ioyfulnes: giuing thanks vnto the Father, which hath made vs meete to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saincts in light. And Psal. 119 Dauid sayth: Instruct me, & I will keepe thy lawe, yea I will obserue it vvith my vvhole hart. And thus ye haue out of the first sentence of this text, that the knowledge of God doth come from ẏ father. It is needeful that he lay the first stone in our building, otherwise we shal labour in vaine. But that is done thus: God sendeth vnto vs Preachers, whom he hath taught, and prouideth that his will be preached vnto vs. First that all our life and cōdition, although it haue a fayre shew & be holy outwardly, is of no estimation before him, yea is abhorred and lothed of him. And this is called the preaching of the law. Afterward he maketh grace to be preached vnto vs, to wit, that he will not haue vs vtterly condemned

The knowledge of God.

The preaching of the law.

The preaching of the Gospell.

and cast of, but that he will receiue vs in his beloued sonne, and not simply receiue vs, but also make vs heires in his kingdom, yea and Lordes ouer all thinges which are in heauen and earth. This nowe is called the preaching of grace or of the Gospell. And all this is of God, which rayseth vp and sendeth forth Preachers. This S. Paule signifieth when he sayth thus Rom. 10: Faith is by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. This also the wordes of the Lorde meane here in the Gospell, when he sayth:

It is written in the Prophets: And they shall be all taught of God. Euery man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, commeth vnto me: Not that any man hath seene the Father, saue he which is of God, he hath seene the Father. Whē as we heare the first preaching, that is the preaching of the law, howe we are condemned with all our workes, then man sigheth vnto God, and knoweth not what to doe, his conscience is euill and fearefull, and except helpe should come in time, he shoulde despeire for euer. Wherefore the other preaching must not be long differred, the Gospell must be preached vnto him, and the way vnto Christ must be shewed, whom God hath giuen vnto vs a Mediatour, that through him alone we may be saued, by meere grace and mercy, without all our owne workes and merits. Then the hart is made ioyfull, and hasteth vnto such grace, as the thirsty hart runneth vnto ỹ water. Dauid had a notable feeling hereof, when he sayd thus Psal. 42: Like as the hart desireth the vvater brookes, so longeth my soule after thee, O God: My soule thirsteth for God, yea euen for the liuing God. When therefore a man commeth to Christ, through the Gospell, then heareth he the voyce of the Lord Christ, which strengtheneth the knowledge that God hath taught him: to wit, that God is nothing els but a Sauiour abounding with grace, who will be fauorable and mercifull to all them, which call vpon him in this his Sonne. Therefore the Lord sayth moreouer:

What the preaching of the law worketh in man.

The preaching of the Gospel what it worketh in vs.

Verely, verely I say vnto you, He that beleeueth in me, hath euerlasting life. I am that breade of life. Your Fathers did eate Manna in the vvildernes, and are dead. This is that bread vvhich cōmeth dovvne from heauen, that he vvhich eateth of it should not die. I am that liuing bread, vvhich came dovvne from heauen: if any man eate of this bread, he shall liue for euer: and the bread

bread that I vvill giue, is my flesh, vvhich I vvill giue for the life of the vvorld. In these vvordes the soule findeth a table daintily furnished, whereby it may slake all hunger. For it knoweth assuredly that he that speaketh these vvordes can not lye. Wherefore if it commit it selfe confidently vnto him, and cleaue to the vvord, it resteth vpon him, and so departeth not from this goodly table. This is that supper, to the preparing whereof the heauenly Father killed his oxen and fatlings, and hath bidden vs all vnto it. The liuing breade whereof the Lorde here maketh mention, is Christ him selfe, whereby we are so fedde. If we lay hold but of a morsell of this bread in our harts, and keepe it, we shall be satisfied for euer, neither can we euer be plucked from God. Moreouer such an eating is nothing els, but to beleue in ỹ Lord Christ, that he is made vnto vs of God, as Paule sayth 1. Cor 1. wisedom, righteousnes, sanctification, and redemption. He that eateth this meat, liueth for euer. Wherefore by and by after this text, when the Iewes were at contention about these his wordes, he sayth: Verely, verely I say vnto you, Except ye eate the flesh of the Sonne of man and drinke his blood, ye haue no life in you. VVhosoeuer eateth my flesh, & drinketh my blood hath eternall life, & I vvill rayse him vp at the last day. Manna which the fathers did eate in the desert (as Christ here sayth) could not saue from death: but this bread maketh vs immortall. If we beleeue in Christ, death shall not hurt vs any thing at all, yea there is no more death. This the Lord meaneth by these wordes in an other place, where he sayth to ỹ Iewes: Verely, verely I say vnto you, if a man keepe my word, he shall neuer see death: where it is certaine that he speaketh of the word of faith, and of the Gospell.

Christ the liuing bread, whereon we must feede by faith.

Ioh. 8. 51.

But some man may say that holy men die notwithstanding, for Abraham & the holy Prophets are dead, as the Iewes sayd vnto him. I aunswere: The death of Christians is onely a sleepe, as the Scripture also commonly calleth it: for a Christian tasteth & seeth no death, that is, he hath the feeling of no death. For this Sauiour Christ Iesus, in whom he beleeueth, hath ouercome death, ỹ afterwards he shoulde not feele or tast it, but death is vnto him onely a passage and gate to life, as Christ him selfe witnesseth Joh. 5: Verely, verely I say vnto you, he that heareth my vvord, & beleeueth in him that sent me, hath euerlasting life, & shall not come into condemnation, but hath passed from death

An obiectiō.

The aunswer

to life. Wherefore the life of a Christian is merie, and on euery side replenished with ioy, and the yoke of Christ is easie & sweete. But that it seemeth heauy and grieuous vnto vs, this is the cause, for that the Father hath not yet drawne vs: hereupon it commeth to passe that we take no pleasure thereof, neither is the Gospell comfortable vnto vs. If so be that we would lay vp the wordes of Christ well in our hart, they would be vnto vs an exceeding comfort. And thus ye haue heard howe we must feede on this breade which came downe from heauen, that is, on the Lord Christ, to wit by faith, which we then do when we beleeue in him, that he is our Sauiour.

The whole chapter out of which this text is taken, commendeth vnto vs nothing els but spirituall meat. For when the multitude followed Christ, that they might againe eate and drinke, which the Lord him selfe signifieth, he taketh occasion of the corporal meat which they sought, & almost through the whole chapter speaketh of spirituall meat, as he sayd: The wordes which I speake are spirit and life. Wherby he would signifie, that he therfore fed them, that they should beleeue in him: & as they did eate the bodily meat, so they ought also to feede of the spirituall. Here let vs weie and marke this, that the Lord doth so gently and graciously apply him selfe to vs, and offer him selfe in such gentle wordes, that it ought worthely to moue our hartes to beleeue in him, to wit, that that bread, was therefore giuen for vs, inasmuch as it was behouefull that he should tast death and suffer hellish paines: Also should beare sinnes which he neuer had committed, as though he had committed them, and had bene his owne: and he did also the same willingly for our sakes, and tooke vs as brethren and sisters. This if we beleeue, we doe the will of the heauenly Father, which is nothing els but to beleeue in his Sonne, & so be saued. As Christ him selfe sayth a litle before: This is the will of him that sent me, that euery man which seeth the Sonne, and beleeueth in him, should haue euerlasting life. If now therfore appeareth that he that hath faith doth the will of God, and eateth of this heauenly bread. As Augustine sayth: What doost thou prepare thy mouth, beleeue, and thou hast eaten. Of this spirituall supper the whole new Testament speaketh, but especially in this place of Iohn. The Sacrament of Christes body & blood is a certaine testimonie and pledge of this true supper, whereby we

The will of the heauenly Father.

we ought to strengthen our faith, and to be assured, that this body and this blood, whereof we feede in the Sacrament, deliuereth vs from synne, death, Satan, and all euell.

But how may a man perceiue and know, that he also doth pertaine to this heauenly bread, and is called to this spirituall supper? let him consider the case in his owne heart, which if he synde so affected, that it doth as it were feele a sweetenes in the promise of God, and is vndoutedly perswaded, that he is of the companie of them which pertaine to his supper, he is assuredly such a one in deede. For as we beleeue, so commeth it vnto vs. Such a man hath also byandby a regard of his neighbour, and helpeth him as his brother, careth for him, giueth vnto him, lendeth him, comforteth him, briefly doth no otherwise to him then he desireth to be done vnto himselfe. And all this proceedeth from hence, for that the bountifullnes and goodnes of Christ hath replenished his heart with sweetnes and loue, that it is a pleasure and ioy vnto him to do good to his neighbour, yea and he is grieued if there be none toward whom he may be seruiceable. And beside all this, he is tractable and lowly towardes all men, he doth not esteeme the temporall pleasure and pride of life, he iudgeth no man, he defameth no man, he interpreteth all thinges in the better part. Whē as he seeth that the matter goeth not well with his neighbour, as that he fainteth in faith, waxeth colde in loue, and that his life is not on euerie side approueable, he prayeth for him, and is sore grieued if any commit any thinge against God and his neighbour. In a summe, the roote and sappe are found, for they are in a flourishing vine, to wit, Christ, and therefore such frutes come forth. But if any be voide of faith, and not taught of God, such a one doth not feede on this heauēly bread, neither bringeth forth these frutes. For where a right faith is not, there such frutes are alwayes wanting. And therefore S. Peter teacheth vs to make our calling vnto saluation, sure by good workes, where he speaketh properly of the workes of loue, namely, that we do good to our neighbour, and be affected toward him, as toward our owne flesh and blood. Thus much shall suffize concerning this text. Let vs call to God for his grace.

How a man maye know whether he be called to this spirituall supper.

Charitie towarde our neighbour the frute of true faith.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, CONCERNING GOOD WORKES THE FRVTES OF FAITH.

Rom. 13.

Verse 11. AND this also we know the seaſon, how that it is time that we ſhould now ariſe from ſleepe: for now is our ſaluation nerer, then when we beleeued.

12. The night is paſt, and the day is at hand, let vs therefore caſt awaye the workes of darkenes, and let vs put on the armour of light.

13. Let vs walke honeſtly, as in the daye: not in gluttonie and dronkennes, neither in chambering and wantonnes, nor in ſtrife and enuiyng:

14. But put ye on the Lord Ieſus Chriſt, and take no thought for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſtes of it.

Whereof the preſent text intreateth.

THE Apoſtle in this text teacheth, not of faith, but of workes the frutes of faith, ſhewing how the life of a Chriſtian ought to be ordered and framed according to the fleſh outwardly among men. For how we muſt liue in the ſpirit and before God, faith doth teach, whereof Paul a litle before this place hath at large and euen apoſtolikely entreated. Yea if we conſider this text well, it doth not ſo much teach, as prouoke, exhort, moue, and ſtirre vp them which are already taught, what they muſt do. For Paul diuideth the office of preaching into two parts, into doctrine and exhortation, Rom. 12. Doctrine is, whē one teacheth that which was not knowne before, whereby men

The office of preaching diuided into two partes.

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are instructed & come to vnderstanding. Exhortation is, when ỳ preacher moueth & prouoketh vnto ỳ which is already knowne. Either is necessarie to be done of him, who will christianly performe the duty of preaching, wherefore Paul doth verie earnestly apply himselfe to both, and that his exhortation may be more effectuall, & may more acceptably enter into the mindes of them whom he hath purposed to exhort, he vseth certaine elegant and figuratiue speches, and doth with an adorned maner of speaking allure their mindes vnto him. For the wordes, sleepe, darknes, light, waking, armour, workes, the day, the night, which he here vseth, are all spoken figuratiuely, by which other thinges are signified, then their nature and proprietie doe beare: for he speaketh not of the naturall night, daye, darkenes, armour, waking, sleepe, &c: but he resembleth by these naturall thinges a certaine likenes to our mynde, whereby he may more forcibly prouoke and bring vs to those spirituall thinges. As if he saide, ye see how men to get the riches of the present time, which do soone perish, rise early, and laying aside the workes of darkenes, applie themselues to the workes of the day, after the night is passed, and the day is come: with how much greater diligence ought we, shaking of our sleepe, to rise early, and casting awaye the workes which we did while it was yet darke, to applie our selues now to those workes which are agreable to our light, forasmuch as the night is now passed, and the daye of our saluation hath appeared?

What the Apostle meaneth by the words, sleepe, to rise, &c.

By sleepe he signifieth euel workes which are voide of faith: for sleepe is a worke properly meete for the night, and that he meaneth thus, he sufficiently declareth, when he byandby after addeth: Let vs cast awaye the workes of darkenes. So contrariwise, to wake and to rise signifie good workes which come of faith. For as sleepe pertaineth properly to the night, so to rise is properly agreable to the morning and daye. Whereupon it is sayd 1. Thess. 5: Beloued brethren, ye are not in darkenes, but ye are all the children of light and of the daye: we are not of the night, neither of darkenes, wherefore let vs not sleepe as do other, but let vs watch and be sober. For they that sleepe, sleepe in the night, and they that be dronken, are dronken in the night. But let vs which are of the day, be sober, putting on the brest plate of faith and loue, and the hope of saluation for an helmet.

For God hath not appointed vs vnto wrath, but to obtaine saluation by the meanes of our Lord Iesus Christ, which died for vs, that whether we wake or sleepe, we should liue togither with him. It is sufficiently manifest, that the Apostle doth not in these wordes forbid vs the sleepe of nature, neuertheles he draweth a similitude from naturall sleepe and waking, to spirituall, that is, to a good and euell life. And to be briefe, to rise out of sleepe is here the very same thing that the Apostle writeth, Tit. 2: That grace of God, that bringeth saluation vnto all men, hath appeared, & teacheth vs that we should denie vngodlynes & worldly lustes, and that we should liue soberly and righteously, and godly in this present world: looking for that blessed hope and appearing of the glorie of that mightie God, and of our Sauiour Iesus Christ. For that which he calleth in these wordes, to deny vngodlines and worldly lustes, he calleth in the text which we haue in hand, to arise from sleepe, and that which he termeth to liue soberly, and righteously, and godly, that he calleth in our present text, to watch, and to put on the armour of light, and whereas he sayth: the grace of God that bringeth saluation, hath appeared, that he calleth here the day and light, of which we wil hereafter speake more at large.

Naturall and spiritual sleepe cõpared togither.

Now let vs see what likenes there is betweene naturall and spirituall sleepe. He that sleepeth naturally, neither seeth, nor feeleth any of those good thinges that are in the world, but lieth among those thinges which are euen next adioyning vnto him, as it were dead, seruing to no vse, neither regarding any thing at all. For albeit he liue in himselfe, yet is he as dead to all other. Againe, in stede of true thinges, he is in dreames wholy occupied with vaine images and formes of thinges, which appeare true, and is so foolish that he embraceth those vaine formes, and thinketh them to be true thinges. But when he waketh, those images do togither banish awaye, and the man beginneth to be occupied with true thinges. After the same maner almost it is, when one is as it were swallowed vp of vngodlines, for he sleepeth, and is like a dead man before God, neither seeth he, neither feeleth any of the good thinges, which are good thinges in deede, namely, those spirituall good thinges, which are promised & offered him by the Gospell, albeit they be iust by him. For those thinges are seene and felt by faith alone, otherwise they are remoued from

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all sight and feeling. Wherefore as long as by reason of the sleep of his vnbeleefe, he can haue neither any regard or sense of true good thinges, which are verie neere him through the Gospell, he busieth himselfe with the false good thinges of this world, as riches, promotions, and pleasures, which being compared vnto eternall life, vnto heauenly ioy, and that perfect saluation which commeth to the godly, are altogither as dreames, and as those vaine visions compared to naturall thinges, whereof they are onely representations. But when man awaketh, and hath receiued faith, all regard and desire of those false good thinges of this present life vanisheth awaye, and he acknowledgeth that they are nothing els but meere vanitie and falshood, euen as those visions do quite fade away as soone as a man awaketh out of naturall sleepe. Hereof the 76. Psalme speaketh? They haue slept their sleepe, and they whose handes were mightie, haue found nothing. And Psal. 73: Like as a dreame when one awaketh, so shalt thou make their image to vanish out of the citie. And Esay 29: As whē a hungrie mā dreameth that he is eating, & yet whē he awaketh his soule is emptie: or as when a thirstie man dreameth that he is drinking, and when he awaketh he is yet faint, and his soule hath appetite: euen so shall the multitude of all nations be, that fighteth against mount Sion. See how contemptuously and disdainfully the Prophet speaketh of the chiefe power, riches, pleasures and promotions of the world, and likeneth them to dreames and most vaine visions wherewith they which are asleepe are deluded. What other durst say, that the good thinges, riches and power of these Kings, Princes, and rich men, are nothing els but dreames, when as for them men mingle earth with heauen, fyer with water, raging without measure and ende in the world? But the cause hereof is, for that they yet sleepe, therefore they do yet see nothing hereof, as they want fayth, so also are they destitute of this light.

For now is our saluation neerer, then whē we beleued. What meane these wordes? did we beleeue before, and do we not beleeue now? Here we must call to minde that which Paul writeth Rom. 1: that God promised the Gospell by his Prophets in the holy Scriptures, cōcerning his Sonne Iesus Christ our Lord, that all should by him be saued, according to that which was said vnto Abraham Gen. 22: In thy seede shal all the nations of the

The promise of God concerning saluation by his Sonne.

earth be blessed. This blessing promised to Abraham in his seede, is nothing els, but grace and saluation in Christ offered to the whole world by the Gospell, which Paule so interpreteth Rom. 4. and Gal. 3. For Christ is that seede of Abraham, that is, as he is man, his flesh and blood, by whom and in whom shal be blessed, as many as beleeue in him, and call vpon him. This promise was afterward by the Prophets continually more and more declared and preached, for they did all write of the comming of Christ, of the grace which he should bring, and of the Gospell, which Peter also witnesseth Act. 4. This promise of God all the faithfull beleeued which died before Christ was borne, who by this faith were saued, and obtained saluation in Christ and through Christ. Hereunto Paul now had respect when he said: Our saluation is now neerer, then when we beleeued. For that which he saith is thus much in effect: We beleeued in time past that the promise made vnto Abraham, should be fulfilled, now is it fulfilled, and those thinges that we beleeued should come to passe, are now present: Christ is come, the Gospell is reuealed and published, and the blessing which we looked for, is spred ouer the world, all thinges which we taried for, and beleeued being promised, are come. And hereby the Apostle signified the spirituall daye, whereof he speaketh afterward, which is properly the beginning and manifestation of the Gospell, whereof we will hereafter speake.

Now by this, that those thinges which we beleeued should be fulfilled, are now fulfilled, our faith is not any whit made voide or frustrate, but much more sound and perfect. For as they of the olde time before Christes incarnation beleeued the promise of God which should be fulfilled, so do we beleeue that the same is fulfilled, and the faith is altogether the same in it selfe, but that our faith followed theirs, as the fulfilling followeth also the promise. For either faith trusteth in the seede of Abraham, that is in Christ, theirs before his incarnation, ours after it. Wherefore he that should at this day beleeue with the Iewes that Christ is to come, should make God a lyer, as though he had not yet fulfilled his promise, which he hath fulfilled, and being fulfilled would haue it published and preached. So also should saluation be yet farre from the beleeuers, which we should looke for being as yet to come, in the time that shall hereafter follow.

The faith of them which liued before Christes incarnation & theirs which liue after it, all one in it selfe.

Of

Of this double faith Paul speaketh Rom. 1: By the Gospell righteousnes, which God giueth, is reuealed from faith to faith. What meaneth this, from faith to faith? nothing els, but that albeit the faith of the Fathers and our faith is the same, whereby it is beleeued in Christ either to come, or which hath already appeared: yet the Gospell doth lead from their faith to ours, so that it is now necessarie not onely to beleeue the promise that was to be fulfilled, but also that it is fulfilled, which it did not behoue Abraham and the other Fathers to beleeue, although they had the same Christ which we haue. For there is one faith, one spirit, one Christ, one communion of all Saincts, this difference onely there is betweene vs, that they went before Christ, we follow him.

We haue therefore beleeued, and we do also beleeue, to wit the Fathers and we, with a like and common faith in the same Christ, although not after the same maner, as it is saide. And as by reason of this communion of faith which we haue a like in the same Christ, we say: we haue beleeued, or we did beleeue, when as not we, but the Fathers haue beleeued or did beleeue: so they againe did say, that they should heare, see, and beleeue in Christ, when as not they, but we do liue in that time. We read not in a few places of the Scriptures, that they which were before the incarnation of Christ, tooke vpon them the person of them which are after it, and they which are after it, of them which were before it, because of the communion of faith, and the same Christ, which they haue in common, and so there is as it were one companie of beleeuers. Now whereas the Apostle saith, that saluation is now neerer vnto vs then when we beleeued, that is, when our Fathers those auncient beleeuers did looke for it to come, we must not vnderstād it of the neerenes of possession, as though we now had it neerer and more certainly then they, for the Fathers had altogither the same faith, as it is said, and the same Christ, wherefore saluation was as neere vnto them as vnto vs. For Christ yesterday, and to day, the same also is for euer. Heb. 13. Christ continueth the same from the beginning of the world euen vnto the end, by whom all are saued alike. But Paul speaketh of the neerenes of reuealing, that what soeuer thinges were saide before concerning Christ, they were now fulfilled, death being ouercome, the Lord did sitte at the right hand of the Fa-

How saluatiō is neerer vnto vs then it was to the beleuers before Christes incarnation.

ther, the Gospell was preached abroad in the world, by which Christ did come vnto all in the whole world, for this cause Paul sayth that our saluation is neerer then when it was hidden, and knowne vnto few men: because that Christ being not yet glorified, it was not meete that the preaching of saluation should be made publike or common.

Whereas therefore the Apostle sayth here, Our saluation is now neerer vs, he sayth the same thing in the Epistle to Titus in other wordes: The grace of God, which bringeth saluation, hath appeared, that is, hath sprong forth, and is euerie where commonly preached: although it was not hid before in any of the Saincts, notwithstãding it was not yet commonly knowne vnto the world. After the same sort the Scripture speaketh in many places, when it sometime saith that Christ is to come, sometime, that he is come, although he alwayes hath bin, and is in all the elect. Howbeit because he had not before his resurrection come to all by publike preaching, the Scripture speaketh diuersly of his comming. For because of this publike preaching he came in the flesh, being made man, for his incarnation had not bin profitable to any, if the Gospell had not thereupon bin preached, by which he came into the whole world, and whereby it is commonly knowne, why he was made man, whereby that blessing promised to Abraham, is now published, and made common to all which by the Gospell beleeue in Christ. Hereupon Paul sayth verie well, Rom. 1. that the Gospel was promised of God, &c. as though he would say, although God hath promised euerie where in the writinges of the Prophets his sonne in the flesh, yet forasmuch as all that should be done, that the Gospell might be preached abroad in the world, whereby he commeth spiritually to the myndes of the beleeuers, (which comming onely bringeth saluation, and is farre to be preferred before that comming in the flesh, inasmuch as it was done because of this) I say rather that God promised by the Prophets in the Scriptures the Gospell concerning his sonne. For God considered the Gospell and our faith in all these thinges, for which he would also haue him to be made man, that the Gospel might be preached of him, that being made man, he hath saued vs by his death, and that the saluation which he hath wrought, might go into the whole world, and be made neere vnto all. Some haue taught fower commynges of

The cõming of Christ by ỹ preaching of the Gospell.

Christ,

Chriſt, according to the fower ſundayes in Aduent as they call it, but this comming of Chriſt by the Goſpell, which is moſt neceſſarie of all, and of which all do depend, of which Paul here ſpeaketh, this cõming I ſay they could not ſee, inaſmuch as they are ignorant, both what the Goſpell is, and to what end it was giuen. They babble many things of the comming of Chriſt, and neuertheles they driue him further from themſelues, thẽ heauen is diſtaunt from the earth. For what can Chriſt profit any man, which doth not poſſeſſe him by faith? or how can any man poſſeſſe him by faith, where the Goſpell is not preached?

The night is paſſed and the day is at hand: His meaning in effect is, that ſaluation is at hand. For by the day Paule vnderſtandeth the Goſpell, namely, that it is that daye, whereby our hearts and mindes are enlightned, therefore ſuch a day being ſprong, our ſaluation is certainly at hand, that is, Chriſt and his grace promiſed in time paſt to Abraham, hath ſhined forth by preaching in the whole world, giueth light vnto all men, raiſeth all out of ſleepe, sheweth true and eternall good things, wherein we may be hereafter occupied, and may walke honeſtly in this day. Contrariwiſe, by the night all doctrine is to be vnderſtood, which is not the Goſpell, beſide which none can bring ſaluation. But if thou do a litle more exactly wey the wordes, thou ſhalt ſee that Paule deſcribeth that part of the daye, which is moſt delectable of all, and moſt full of all pleaſauntnes, namely the ioyfull and amiable morning, and the riſing of the ſunne. For it is the morning when the night is gone and ended, and the daye is nowe come, whereupon all thinges are meruelouſly cheered and recreated, the birdes ſing, other ſpuing creatures doe ſtirre vp with alacritie and iopfulnes: men being as it were made aliue againe, doe goe forth to their labours: all thinges, the daye ſpringing, and the morning ſhining, are ſo affected, as though the world were renued, and all thinges reſtored to life againe.

By the daye what is ſignified.

What is here ment by the night.

Wherefore in many places of the Scripture, the ioyfull, proſperous, and quickning preaching of the Goſpell is likened to the morning and the riſing of the ſunne, as it is here of Paule who calleth the Goſpell the day ſpringing or ariſing. Alſo Pſal. 110: In the daye of thy power ſhall the people offer thee free will offeringes, of the wombe of the morning ſhall the dewe of

The preaching of the Goſpell likened to the morning.

thy children ſpring. Here alſo the Goſpell is plainly called the wombe of the morning, and the daye of the power of Chriſt, wherein we are conceiued and borne the children of God as deaw, to wit, without the labour of men, by the onely grace of the holy Ghoſt from heauen. The moſt pleaſaunt and comfortable ſunne Jeſus Chriſt maketh this daye, whom the Scripture hereupon calleth the ſunne of righteouſnes. God ſayth Mala. 4: To you that feare my name, shall that ſunne of righteouſnes ariſe, and helth shalbe vnder this winges. For as many as beleeue in Chriſt, do receiue of him the beames of his grace and righteouſnes, and doe obtaine ſaluation vnder his winges. Whereupon it is ſaide Pſal. 118: This is the daye which the Lord hath made, we will reioyce and be glad in it, as though he ſaide: This corporall ſunne maketh the corporall daye, but God himſelfe maketh this daye, euen he is that ſunne, from whence thoſe beames and that daye come, wherewith the whole world is enlightned. Finally, hereupon he calleth himſelfe the light of the world, Joh. 9. And Pſal. 19: The heauens declare the glorie of God, that is, euen as theſe bodily heauens do bring the ſunne and the day, and the ſunne is caried in them, ſo the Apoſtles haue in themſelues, and bring by preaching, the true ſunne, which is Chriſt, &c: Whereupon it followeth: In the heauens he hath ſet a tabernacle for the ſunne, which commeth forth as a bridegrome out of his chamber, and reioiceth as a giant to runne his courſe. His ſetting forth is from the vtmoſt part of heauen, and his circuit vnto the vtmoſt part thereof: and there is nothing hid from his heat. All this is ſaid of the exceeding pleaſaunt beginning or riſing of this day, that is of the Goſpel, which the Scripture euery where meruelouſly ſetteth forth. For it is a word which quickneth, maketh glad, willing, cheerefull, and ready to do good workes, and finally it bringeth with it all good thinges. Wherefore it is called the Goſpell or glad tydinges, for that it is a pleaſaunt, and proſperous meſſage of the grace of God, and of all good thinges.

Chriſt the ſunne of righteouſnes.

The Goſpell reuealeth vnto vs all thinges that are needfull for vs to know.

But who is able to rehearſe all thoſe thinges, which this day reuealeth & maketh manifeſt vnto vs? For it teacheth all things, what God is, what we are, whatſoeuer is paſt, and to come, of heauen, hell, the earth, Angels and Deuels. By this lampe is shewed vnto vs, how we ought to behaue our ſelues in all theſe thinges

thinges, and toward all, from whence we are, and whither we go. Yet neuertheles Satan hath deceiued vs miserable creatures, that neglecting such a day, whereby all thinges might be cleere and manifest vnto vs, we seeke the truth of Philosophers and heathen men, who haue not so much as by a dreame knowne any whit of these thinges, and so we haue suffered our selues to be blynded with mens traditions, and to be thrust backe againe into the night. For it is not light, whatsoeuer is not this day, otherwise Paul and the whole Scripture should in vaine extoll this day alone, and call all other beside it the night. Surely the burden of Gods displeasure must needes be most grieuous, for that contrarie to so plaine and manifest places of Scripture, we haue sought an other light, although the Lord himselfe calleth himselfe the light and sunne of the worlde. And if other proofes were wantinge, this one is sufficient, that vniuersities doe so impudently both set vp and glorie of Aristotle as a light vnto them, in whom they exercise themselues much more then in Christ, yea nothing in Christ, but altogither in Aristotle.

Let vs therefore cast awaye the workes of darkenes, and let vs put on the armour of light. As Christ is the sunne, and the Gospell the daye, so fayth is the light whereby to see and watch in this daye. For it would not profit, albeit the sunne did shine, and make the day, if the eyes did not perceiue the light. Wherefore although the Gospell be begon and preached in the whole worlde, yet none are lightened, but they that receiue it, and by fayth being made capable of the light, doe arise out of sleepe. But to them that as yet sleepe this sunne and daye bring no profite, of which they receiue no light, no more then if no sunne or daye had shined. And this is that season and hower, whereof he speaketh: VVelbeloued brethren, forasmuch as we know this, that it is now time that vve should arise out of sleepe, &c. It is a spirituall time and season, although begun in this outward time, as it doth daily also come, wherein we ought to arise out of sleepe, and lay aside the workes of darkenes. Whereby Paule sheweth that he doth not speake to them, which are yet voide of fayth: for as it is saide, he teacheth not faith here, but the workes and frutes of fayth, when as he saith: We know that the time is come, and that the night being passed, the daye

By light is here signified and ment faith.

is at hand: they which beleeue not can not know these thinges. Now if thou obiect and saye, what reason or cause is there that he should write these thinges to the faithfull, inasmuch as they know that it is time? &c. Thou must call to mynde that in the beginning of the exposition of this text of the Apostle, we haue saide that the office of preaching is of two sortes, one of teaching, an other of exhorting and mouing. Now a man can not attaine vnto that knowledge, that it should not be needefull that he be alwayes moued, and kept in a continuall and fresh meditation of those thinges which he hath learned, least the deuell, the world, and the flesshe (which are enemies that neuer graunt truce, neither slacke their assault) doe make him wearie and slouthfull, that he maye at the last sleepe, and become altogether negligent in good thinges. For the deuell, sayth Peter, is such an enemie, as goeth about continually like a roring Lion, seeking whom he maye deuoure: Wherefore he sayth: VVatch and be sober. Paule also will haue vs doe the same thinge here. For seeinge that the Deuell, the flesshe, and the worlde keepe no meane, nor make no ende of fightinge against vs, neither must there be any meane kept or ende made of exhortinge, prouokinge, and mouinge vs to watche and worke. Hereupon the holie Ghost is called an exhorter, inasmuch as he inuiteth and moueth vs vnto good.

We haue neede of cõtinuall exhortation.

For the same cause Paul also vseth here chosen wordes: the workes of darkenes he calleth not armour, but the workes of light he calleth armour, not workes: vndoutedly that he might shewe, that there is a fight, that labour and trauell is required, and that it can not be obtained without perill, to watche and liue well, forasmuch as so mightie enemies, the deuell, the flesh, and the world do without ceassing fight against vs, wherefore Iob sayth chapter 7: The life of man vpon earth is a fight and tentation. Nowe it is not a small matter to stand all our life long in the battaill, wherefore there is neede of verie shrill trumpets and warlike drummes, that is of earnest admonitions and exhortations, whereby we maye be stirred vp and encouraged to perseuer valliauntly in the fight. Hereupon nowe it appeareth, why he calleth good workes armour or weapons, and calleth not the workes of darkenes so, which notwithstanding,

Paule calleth the workes of light armour, and why.

if

if we consent vnto them are also weapons, Rom. 6: Giue not your members as weapons of vnrighteousnes. Againe, it is before saide, that by light is here signified faith, which from the daye of the Gospell by the sunne Christ, shineth into our hearetes, and enlightneth them, therefore the armour or weapons of light are nothing else but the workes of this faith. Contrariwise, darkenes is infidelitie or vnbeleefe, which is by reason of the absence of the Gospell as of the daye, and of Christ as of the sunne. This darkenes the deuell doth rule, which commeth from the doctrine of men, and the iudgement of mans owne reason: wherefore the workes of darkenes, are the workes of infidelitie. For as Christ is the Lord and gouerner of the light, which we saide to be faith: so Paule Ephes. 6. calleth Satan the prince of darkenes, that is, of them which are without faith, and refuse to be obedient to God, as the same Apostle witnesseth 2. Corinth. 4: If our Gospell be then hyd, it is hyd to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world (namely the deuell) hath blynded the myndes, that is, of the infidels, that the light of the glorious Gospell of Christ should not shine vnto them. But what both this armour or weapons of light, and workes of darkenes are, it is now taught of the Apostle.

The armour of light what it is.

The workes of darkenes what they are.

Let vs walke honestly as in the day. No man worketh those things in the day, which he is wont to worke in darkenes, euerie one feareth an other, and endeuoureth himselfe to liue honestly. It is commonly sayd: The night is void of shame, which is true, and therefore men doe those thinges in the night, which they would be ashamed to do in the daye, but the daye is not without shame, and requireth an honest conuersation. After the same sort ought a Christian life to be: a Christian ought to commit nothing, whereof he may be ashamed, although the whole worlde should see his workes & doinges. For he that liueth and worketh so, that he is vnwilling that all his workes and doinges should be seene and heard of all men, and his whole life be manifestly knowne vnto all, liueth a liue vnworthie of Christ, according to that which our Sauiour himselfe sayth Ioh. 3: Euerie man that doth euell, hateth the light, neither commeth to light, least his deedes should be reproued. But he that doth truth, commeth to the light, that his deedes might be made manifest, that they are wrought according to God. Hereby it appeareth how ne-

The life of a Christian.

ceſſarie it is, that we ſhould be prouoked and exhorted to watch and to put on the armour of light. For what one is there at this day among Chriſtians, which can abide, that all his workes ſhould be publiſhed openly in the light. Now what a Chriſtian life is this, how hypocritically do we liue, when as we can not ſuffer our life ſo much as to be diſcloſed before men, which now is diſcloſed before God and all his Angels, and in the laſt day ſhalbe diſcloſed before all creatures? Wherefore it behoueth a Chriſtian to liue ſo, as he deſireth to appeare in the laſt day, and before all. Hereupon Paul ſaith: Walke as the children of light: the frute of the Spirit is goodnes, and righteouſnes, and truth. And Rom. 12: Procure thinges honeſt, not onely in the ſight of God, but alſo in the ſight of all men. And 2. Cor. 1: Our reioicing is this, the teſtimonie of our conſcience, that in ſimplicitie and godly purenes, and not in fleshly wiſedome, but by the grace of God we haue had our conuerſation in the world. Howbeit ſuch a life ſhall nothing at all appeare, where faith is not, but where a liuely, a cheerefull and a ſtrong faith is, there ſuch a life can not be wanting, forasmuch as ſuch a faith is not wearied, with well doing, neither ſleepeth. Wherefore it is no leſſe neceſſarie, to preach to them that haue receiued the doctrine of faith, whereby they maye be prouoked and ſtirred vp to go on in the good life which they haue embraced, and that they ſuffer not themſelues to be ouercome by the aſſaults of the raging fleſh, the craftie worlde, and moſt ſubtle Satan, then it is meete that the doctrine of faith be preached to them that be as yet ignorant of Chriſt.

Eph. 5. 8. 9.

Preaching & exhortation neceſſary for them that do already beleeue.

Not in gluttonie and drunkennes, neither in chambering and wantonnes, nor in ſtrife and enuying. Here he rehearſeth the workes of darkenes by name, one of which he named alſo before, to wit, ſleepe, according to that ſaying 1. Theſſal. 5: Let vs not ſleepe as do other, but let vs watch and be ſober. Not that he forbiddeth naturall ſleepe, but ſpirituall, which is infidelitie, whereof thoſe workes of the fleſh proceede: howbeit naturall ſleepe alſo is a worke of darkenes, if it be vſed for pleaſure, and through immoderate filling of the belly, ſo that it is a hinderance to the light, that is, faith, and to the armour thereof. Moreouer theſe ſix workes of darkenes which he here rehearſeth, do comprehend all the reſt. For Gal. 5. and Coloſſ. 3. he reckneth vp

Paule by ſix workes of darkenes cõprehendeth all the reſt.

moe of them. But we wil diuide those, which he here rehearseth, into two sides, the right and the left. On the right side these fower fight with the spirit, gluttonie, drunkennes, chambering and wantonnes: on the left syde (forasmuch as the left syde in the Scriptures signifieth aduersitie) those thinges which proceede from thence do fight, as are wrath, contention and such like: but the right syde signifieth prosperitie, and those thinges which ensue thereof, as delightes, gluttonie, drunkennes, and ouermuch sleepe, &c. Now it is sufficiently manifest, that Paul vnder two workes of darkenes here rehearsed, namely, contention and enuying, doth comprehend the rest also of that sort, among which are bitternes, anger, wrath, crying, and euell speaking. Ephe. 4. And those which he rehearseth in the Epistle to the Galathians: Hatred, debate, emulations, seditions, heresies, murthers, &c. In a summe, hereunto pertaine whatsoeuer come of euell anger, either in wordes or deedes, all which can not be numbred. After the same sort vnder those fower, gluttonie, drunkennes, chambering and wantonnes, he comprehendeth the vices of lust, which are wont to be committed as well in wordes as workes, which also no man is able to number. And so the present wordes of the Apostle doe shewe, neither needeth it any further declaration, that by these six workes all thinges are to be vnderstood, whereby they that are boyd of fayth, and are yet in darkenes, doe liue vnpurely as concerning themselues, and vniustly toward their neighbours, whose whole life is disordered and out course both toward themselues and toward others. For there is no man that knoweth not what it is to be gluttonous and dronken, that is, either to eate or drinke aboue a measure necessarie for the body, it is as well knowne, what it is to sleepe in chambers, and to be wanton, that is, to follow the pleasure of the body, both with sleeping aboue measure, and with other lewd and vnchast gestures and workes, which are wont to be committed in chambers of full fedde, well tipled, idle and slouthfull bellies, as well in the daye, as in the night, as well when they are alone, as in the resort and companie of others. All which thinges do require euen naturall darkenes, and secret places, and are signified of Paule by chambering and wantonnes.

But put ye on the Lord Iesus Christ. In these wordes as it

were in a summe, he sheweth all the armour of light, when as he exhorteth vs to put on Christ. Now Christ is put on of vs after two sortes: first when we are clothed with his righteousnes, which is done by fayth, wherewith he that is endued, beleeueth that Christ for him died, and fulfilled all thinges. For not ours, but Christes righteousnes hath reconciled vs to the Father, and deliuered vs from synnes. And so to put on Christ pertaineth to the doctrine of faith, which teacheth that Christ was giuen vnto vs, and is vnto vs in stede of a pledge. Whereof Paule speaketh Galat. 3: All ye that are baptized into Christ, haue put on Christ. The other maner of putting on Christ is, when we wey and consider, that he is giuen vnto vs also in steede of an example, that we should shewe our selues seruiceable toward our neighbours, being endued with the same vertues, with which we by fayth acknowledge that he being adorned, did serue vs, that so we may resemble him in all points: and of this maner of putting on Christ Paule speaketh here. The same also he willeth vs to doe 1. Corinth. 15. when he saith: As we haue borne the image of the earthly, so let vs now beare the image of the heauenly. And Ephes. 4: Cast ye of, concerning the conuersation in time past, that olde man, which is corrupt through the deceiuable lustes, and be renewed in the spirit of your mynde, and put on the new man, which after God is created vnto righteousnes, and true holines. Now in Christ we see nothing but the armour of light, no gluttonie, no drunkennes, but fasting, temperancie, keeping vnder of the flesh by diuers labours, traueling, preaching, praying, and doing well to all men, in him was no place for slouthfulnes or superfluous sleepe, much lesse for wantonnes, but a meruelous chastitie and puritie: he accustomed himselfe to watche, to rise early, to lye on the ground in the field, hauing neither house, neither chamber, nor bedde: in him was noe wrath, contention or brauling, but altogether goodnes, sweetnes, meekenes, charitie, mercy, patience, &c. Wherefore where as Paule sayth here briefly: Put ye on the Lord Iesus Christ, it is as much as that we should set him before vs as an example to follow.

Christ is put on two maner of wayes.

Colos. 3. 12. He teacheth the Colossians the same thing in somewhat more wordes after this sort: Now therefore as the elect of God holy and

and beloued, put on the bowells of mercie, kindnes, humblenes of minde, meekenes, long suffering: forbearing one an other, & forgiuing one an other, if any man haue a quarrell to an other: euen as Christ forgaue, euen so doe ye. And aboue all these thinges put on loue which is the bond of perfectnes: and let the peace of God rule in your harts, to the which ye are called in one body, and be ye thankefull. And Philip. 2. after that he had exhorted them to loue one an other, and that euery man shoulde esteeme other better then him selfe, and seeke to pleasure & do for other, he also setteth Christ before them as an example, who shewed him selfe to vs our seruaunt, & sayth: Let the same minde be in you that was euen in Christ Iesus, who being in the forme of God thought it no robberie to be equall with God: But he made him selfe of no reputation, and tooke on him the forme of a seruaunt, and was made like vnto men, & was found in shape as a man. The summe therefore is this: the armour or weapons of light are good workes, contrary to those workes of darkenes, gluttonie, drunkennes, chambering, wantonnes, contention, and enuying, such workes are, to fast, to watch to pray, to labour, to suffer hunger, thirst, colde, heat, to be chast, to vse modestie, temperancie, goodnes, and that I doe not thrust in too many of myne owne wordes, let vs heare Paule him selfe rehearsing them in order Gal. 5: The frute of the spirit is loue, ioy, peace, long suffering, gentlenes, goodnes, faith, meekenes, temperancie. But he rehearseth them farre more at large 2. Cor. 6, saying: VVe beseech you that ye receiue not the grace of God in vaine: for he sayth, I haue heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of saluation haue I succoured thee: behold nowe the accepted time, behold now the day of saluation, as if he sayd: Our saluation is now nearer vnto vs then when we beleeued, to wit, that it would come to passe, that these dayes of saluation, in which the Gospell is preached abroad to the whole worlde, shoulde appeare. It is time therefore to arise out of sleepe: Let vs giue no occasion of offence in any thinge, that our ministerie be not reprehended. But in all thinges, let vs approue our selues as the Ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in tumults, in labours: by watchings, by fastings, by puritie, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindnes, by the holy Ghost, by loue vnfeyned: By the word of truth, by

The armour of light.

the power of God, by the armour of righteousnes on the right hand and on the left, By honour, and dishonour, by euill report and good report, as deceiuers, and yet true: as vnknowne, and yet knowne: as dying, and behold we liue: as chastened, and yet not killed: as sorrowing, and yet alway reioycing: as poore, and yet making many rich: as hauing nothing, and yet possessing all thinges. See what a plentifull and very golden streame floweth out of ỹ mouth of Paule. Hereof I think we most plainely perceiue, what is the armour of light, wherewith we must be fenced and fortified both on the right hand, and on the left.

A most excellent and perfect example for all Christians to follow.

Now this most fitly agreeth with the matter, whereas he setteth before vs a most excellent and perfect example, namely the Lord him selfe, saying: Put ye on the Lord Iesus Christ. For he is a sluggish beast and not a man, who when he seeth his Lorde fast, suffer hunger, labour, watch and to be wearie, yet giueth him selfe to gluttonie, sleepe, and pleasures. What Lorde could take these things at his seruaunts hand, nay what seruaunt durst presume to doe these thinges? So it can not be that a Christian man should not be ashamed, when he beholdeth Christ, and seeth him self so vnlike vnto him, yea occupied in quite cõtrary things. For whom the example of Christ him selfe doth not stirre vp, exhort, and moue, who can bringe or stirre him vp vnto goodnes? What would the leaues of wordes doe with their small nopce, if these thundrings of the example of Christ doe not moue? And surely for this cause Paule of purpose adioyned this word, Lord, saying: Put ye on the Lord Iesus Christ, as if he sayd: count it no great nor burdenous thinge, to stand and fight in this armour of light, ye that are seruaunts, behold your Lord, who when he had no neede, did notwithstãding so wel & valiantly vse this armour, and fought in it for you.

Lawfull care for the flesh.

And take no thought for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts of it. The Apostle in these few words hath noted two cares of the flesh: One is naturall, whereby necessary foode and apparell is prouided for the body, that it may liue, and be able to sustaine his labour, lest that it be by ouermuch abstinence weakened, and made vnprofitable to worke. The other care is ioyned with sinne, when the body is prouided for to fulfill the lustes thereof, and that it may be delighted: this care the Apostle here forbiddeth, for it ingendreth the workes of darkenes, so to pamper and make of the

Vnlawfull prouision & care for the flesh.

flesh,

flesh, which is continually to be chastised, that it may be obedient to the spirit, and may not shake of the sitter, like vnto an vntamed horse, albeit that chastising is so to be tempered, that the body notwithstanding may doe his dutie, and beare the sitter. For as the fodder, the whippe and the burden belongeth vnto the asse: so meat, correction, and worke vnto the seruaunt. Ecclesiastic. 33. He doth not say that thou shalt flea or slay the asse, neither that thou shalt kill the seruaunt, or cast him into prison: so vnto the body the chastising and labour thereof is due, and necessary foode is not to be withheld from it. Paule him selfe sayth: I tame my body, and bringe it into subiection. He sayth not, I cast it into sicknes, or I kill it, but I subdue it to the spirit, that it may serue, and be obedient thereunto. 1. Cor. 9. 27.

Moreouer these wordes, to fulfil the lustes thereof, Paule added because of two sortes of men, whereof the first vnder a pretence of naturall necessitie, doe satisfie their pleasure, and couer that practize vnder this false pretence. We are so prone and ready vnto this, that euen many of the Sainctes haue very much complayned of this euil, and because of it, haue oftentimes aboue measure afflicted their bodies: for the flesh is so craftie and meruelous sutle to prepare delights for it selfe, that no man can sufficiently take heede of it, yea it is needefull that a man here doe neuer leaue to care and feare. The other sort of men are those blind holy ones, which thinke that the kingdom of God and the righteousnes thereof consisteth in meates and drinke, and in chosen apparell, and doe beside their owne worke regard nothing: when they haue so fasted, that they haue made their head diseased, and their stomacke distempered, and doe bring vnto their body some great infirmitie or sicknes, they then thinke that they haue bene meruelous holy, and haue wrought incomparable good workes. But Paule sayth: Meat maketh not vs acceptable to God, for neither if we eate, haue we the more: neither if we eate not, haue we the lesse. And Colos. 2. he writeth thus much in effect: Beware of the worshipping of Angells, which hath a shew of wisedom because of humblenes and superstition, whereby they spare not the body, while they withdraw from it the measure of foode due vnto it, bestowing nothing vpon it whereby it may be fedde. This preposterous worshipping of Angells, yea in deede superstition, did so deceiue Gerson, otherwise a notable man, that he

We are prone and ready to fulfill the lustes of the flesh.

Superstitious fasting & abstinence frō meates. 1. Cor. 8. 8.

prayſed the Charterhouſe Monkes, for that they did ſo conſtantly abſtaine from fleſh, that euen when they were ſicke they would eate none, although they might preſerue them ſelues euen from death thereby. But what, if God ſhall iudge them as killers of their owne body? For there can be none at all either ordinaunce or order, yea or vow contrary to the commaundement of God, & if there be any ſuch, ſurely it ought to be of no force, euē as if thou haddeſt vowed adulterie.

Neceſſary prouiſion muſt be made for the body.

Now God both here by Paule, and elswhere hath commaunded, that neceſſary prouiſion ſhould be made for the body, and hath forbidden that we ſhould procure the death of it: wherefore thoſe thinges that are profitable to preſerue it, whether they be fleſh or egges, or any thing elſe, muſt be giuen vnto it, in what day or time ſoeuer, whether it be the firſt or firſt day of the weeke, whether it be Lent or after Eaſter, in the meane ſeaſon whatſoeuer orders, lawes, and vowes, yea euen of the Pope being neglected. For it is not lawfull for any man, no not for the Angells to forbid any thing againſt the commaundement of God. Howbeit this madnes proceedeth from that darkenes and blindnes, wherby miſerable men doe regarde the worke onely, and thinke that they ſhall obtaine ſaluation through the greatnes and multitude of workes. But Paule willeth that our faſtings and other chaſtiſings of the fleſh be the weapons of light, whereby the workes of darkenes may be ouercome, and not the body deſtroyed: wherefore there ought to be no other vſe among Chriſtians of faſtings, watchings and labours. As it is al one before God, whether thou eate fiſh or fleſh: whether thou drinke wine or water: whether thou weare redde or greene garments: all theſe are the good creatures of God, made vnto this ende, that we may vſe them: haue regard only to this, that thou mayſt vſe them with a meane, and mayſt abſtaine thy ſelfe ſo much from them, as ſhall ſuffize to ouercome the workes of darkenes. Wherefore it is vnpoſſible that a common maner of this abſtinence ſhould be appoynted indifferently to all: for the conſtitution of all mens bodies is not alike, it is aboue meaſure to one, which to an other is vnder meaſure: one hath neede of much, an other of litle, and therefore is it meete that euery one haue regard of him ſelfe, and gouerne his owne body, according to the preſent doctrine of Paule, whereas he ſayth: Take no thought for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſtes thereof,

The true end of faſting.

One common maner of faſting can not be appoynted to all.

of, that is, obey the wisedom therof so farre, that ye deny not ẏ necessary things which it requireth, but graunt it not those things, which it requireth to the fulfilling of ẏ lustes thereof, more then necessitie, to pleasure onely. If a better rule of moderation could haue bene giuen beside this, Paule would not haue concealed it.

Hereby thou seest, that the popish ordinaunces, which forbid the eating of flesh and certaine meates, are quite contrary to the Gospell: Which Paule hath plainly foretolde 1. Tim. 4: The Spirit, sayth he, speaketh euidently, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, & shall giue heede vnto spirits of errour, & doctrines of deuils, which speake lyes through hypocrisie, forbidding to mary, and commaunding to abstaine from meates, which God hath created to be receiued with giuing thankes. No man surely can deny that these wordes doe briefly reproue the orders of Monkes and sacrificing Priestes, so cleare and manifest are both these wordes, and also their preposterous religion. Moreouer thou seest here also, godly Reader, that Paul doth not teach that dotage & womanly holines of certaine, which choose vnto them selues certaine dayes, wherein to fast to certaine Sainctes, one to this, an other to that, all which are blinde proceedings, and builded vpon their owne workes. True religion is, without choyce of meates and dayes, all the life long to vse modestie and sobrietie. For seeing that these must be the armour of light, and it is requisite that all our life be vndefiled and chast, it behoueth vs surely neuer to put of this armour, but we must be found alwayes sober, temperate, watching, labouring and praying. But those doting holy ones one day fast nothing but bread & water, & afterward, three whole moneths they daily be drunken and eate excessiuely, euen vntill they be not well in their wits. Others fast so, that at ẏ euening they eate no meate, but in ẏ meane season they make them selues drunke with drinking. Who is able to rehearse all their dotages and all their works of darkenes? all which proceede from hence, for that foolish men consider & regard the worke, & not the vse of the worke, they make of armour a glasse, they are altogither ignorant, whereunto it is profitable to fast and abstaine: they are like vnto him which caried a sword to this ende, that he might looke vpon it, and knew not how to vse it, when he was beaten. These thinges may suffize to haue bene spoken for the exposition of this text.

Popish ordinaunces forbidding the eating of flesh contrary to the Gospell.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, WHEREIN IS TAVGHT HOW THE FAITHFVLL ought to reioyce in God, & let their patient mind be knowne vnto men.

Philip. 4.

Verse 4. REioyce in the Lord alway, againe I say, reioyce.

5. Let your patient mind be knowne vnto all men. The Lord is at hād.

6. Be nothinge carefull, but in all thinges let your requests be shewed vnto God in praier & supplication with giuing of thanks.

7. And the peace of God which passeth all vnderstanding, shall preserue your harts & minds in Christ Iesus.

THis text in deede is but short, neuertheles it doth most plentifully abound with right Christian doctrine, instructing first, howe we ought to behaue our selues toward God, secondly, how toward our neighbours, saying first: Reioyce in the Lorde alway. This ioy is a frute of faith, most certainly following it, as Paule witnesseth Gal. 5 where he sayth: The frute of the Spirit is loue, ioy, peace, longe suffering, gentlenes, goodnes, faith, meekenes, temperancie, &c. Neither can it be that that hart should reioyce in the Lorde, which hath not yet beleeued in him. Whereupon it commeth to passe, that where no faith is, there can be nothing but feare, trembling, horrour, and sadnes, as often as such either remember God, or heare him named: yea hatred and enmitie

Ioy in the Lord a frute of faith, without which there is no true ioy. but sadnes & feare.

enmitie of God remaineth in such harts, the cause whereof is, for that ỹ hart voyd of faith, findeth it selfe defiled with sinnes, wherby it douteth not but that it hath deserued the vengeance of God, that sinnes can not but be hated of God which is iust, & so, when it doth not beleeue that God will be mercifull and fauourable vnto it, how can it not but detest all memorie of him? so farre is it of that it can reioyce in the Lord, the reuenger of sinnes. These two things, the knowledge of sinne, and of the vengeance of God prepared for sinnes are in the hart of the vnbeleeuer, which hart as it is vnbeleeuing, so hath it no hope of pardon, and therefore what other thing can these thinges worke in it, but cause it to be troubled, cast downe and alwayes fearefull, and greatly terrified, and to thinke that ỹ vengeance of God doth euery moment hang ouer it, that so that may be verified which Salomon sayth: The vngodly fleeth when no man pursueth him. And that which is sayd Deut. 28: The Lord shall giue thee a fearefull hart, and thy life shall hang in dout before thee. If a man will much perswade such a hart, to haue ioy in the Lord, he shall doe euen as if he perswaded the water that it should burne like vnto the fire, for it can tast none of this ioy, it alwayes feeleth in conscience, that the reuenging hande of God is heauie vpon it. Whereupon the Prophet sayth Psal. 32. Be glad O ye righteous, and reioyce in the Lorde: and be ioyfull all ye that are true of hart: for this ioy in the Lorde can not be but in the righteous and them that are vpright in hart. And therefore it is manifest that this part of Scripture was writtē not to sinners, but to the righteous & Saincts. Sinners must first be shewed, how they may be deliuered from sinnes, and may obtaine God to be fauorable vnto them, which when they haue learned and so obtained, it followeth that they do of their owne accord reioyce in the Lorde, being deliuered from remorse of conscience. *Pro. 28. 1.*

But if any demaund, how one may be deliuered from remorse of conscience, and haue God mercifull vnto him, that is declared before at large, and shall hereafter be copiously spoken of. He which seeketh to haue a free and glad conscience, and God gentle and fauourable, let him not begin at his owne workes, as the deceitfull Papists teach, onely tormenting consciences, and increasing the wrath of God, but let him despeire of him selfe and of all his owne workes, let him embrace God in Christ, hauing a sure

How a man may be deliuered from remorse of conscience, and be assured of Gods fauour.

faith in the Gospell, that he shall receiue whatsoeuer it promiseth. But the Gospell promiseth that Christ is giuen to vs, that he may take away our sinnes, and be our high Priest, Mediatour and Aduocate before God, that so we may nothing dout, but that our sinnes through Christ onely and his workes are forgiuen vs, and that we are reconciled to God, and that by this meanes our conscience is deliuered and comforted.

The beleeuing hart reioyceth in the Lord.

When such a faith possesseth the hart, and the Gospell is so receiued in deede, then God appeareth sweete & altogither louing, neither feeleth the hart any thing but the fauour & grace of God, it standeth with a stronge and bold confidence, it feareth not lest any euill come vnto it, it being quiet from all feare of vengeance and displeasure, is merie, and glad of so incomparable grace and goodnes of God giuen vnto it freely and most aboundantly in Christ. Wherefore there must needes forthwith proceede from such a faith, loue, ioy, peace, gladnes, giuing of thankes, prayse, & a certaine meruelous delight in God, as in a most deare and fauorable father, which dealeth so fatherly with vs, and poureth forth his giftes so plentifully and in so great a measure, vpon them that doe not deserue them. Behold of such ioy Paule speaketh here, which truely where it is, there can be no place for sinne, or feare of death or hell, yea nothing is there but a ioyfull, quiet and omnipotent trust in God and in his fauour. Wherefore it is called ioy in the Lord, not in gold or siluer, gluttonie or drunkennes, in delicates or singing, health, knowledge, wisedom, power, glory, friendship, fauour, no nor in good workes, holines, or whatsoeuer is without God. Of these thou shalt take but a deceitfull and

Vaine ioy.

vaine ioy, which can not pearse the hart, or enter vnto the bottom thereof, whereof thou mayst rightly say that which is wont to be spoken as a prouerbe amonge the Germanes: This man reioyceth, but he feeleth not any ioy in his hart. There is one ful & perfect ioy, which the beleeuers take of and in the Lord, which is nothing els, then to commit them selues vnto him, and of him alone to reioyce, trust and presume, as of a most fauourable and louing father. Whatsoeuer ioy is not after this sort, the Lord doth contemne and reiect it, whereof Jeremie speaketh chap. 9: Let not the wise man reioyce in his wisedom, nor the stronge man in his strength, neither the rich man in his riches: but whoso will reioyce, let him reioyce in this, that he vnderstandeth and knoweth

eth me. And Paule 2. Cor. 10. sayth: Let him that reioyceth reioyce in the Lord.

He addeth, that we must reioyce alwayes, where he toucheth them, which onely halfe the time doe reioyce in the Lorde, and prayse him that is, when all thinges fall out according to their desire, but when aduersitie commeth, they chaunge ioy with sadnes and sorow, of whom the 48 Psalme speaketh: So longe as thou doest well vnto him, he will speake good of thee. But the Prophet him selfe sayth not so: I will alway blesse God, his prayse shal euer be in my mouth. Psal. 34. And he hath a iust cause so to doe, for who shall hurt him, vnto whom God is mercifull, surely sinne shall not hurt him, neither death nor hel, wherfore the Prophet sayth in an other place: Yea though I walke through the valley of the shadow of death, I will feare no euill. Psal. 23. And Paule sayth Rom. 8: VVho shall separate vs from the loue of Christ? shal tribulation or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakednes, or peril, or sword? I am perswaded that neither death nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor thinges present, nor things to come, nor heigth nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate vs from the loue of God which is in Christ Iesus our Lord.

We must alwayes reioyce in the Lord.

Againe I say reioyce. This repetition of ỳ Apostle confirmeth his exhortation, and truely not without a cause, forasmuch as we liue in the middes of sinnes, and therefore in the middes of tribulations, both which do moue vs vnto sadnes & heauines. Wherefore the Apostle purposing to comfort vs against these, exhorteth vs that we should alwayes reioyce in ỳ Lord, albeit we sometime fall into sinnes. For it is meete, the more God with his goodnes exceedeth the euill of sinne: so much more alwayes to reioyce in him, when we are sorowfull because of our sinnes, which albeit by nature they bring sadnes and sorow with them, yet forasmuch as they can not bringe so much hurt, as Christ, if we beleeue in him, bringeth profit and safetie, ioy in the Lord ought alwayes to haue the first place with vs, and farre to ouercome the sorow and sadnes ỳ commeth by reason of our sinnes. For we must alwayes thinke on that which Iohn writeth: If any man sinne, we haue an Aduocate with the Father, Iesus Christ the righteous, and he is the reconciliation for our sinnes. 1. Ioh. 2.

Though the faithfull sometime fal into sinne, yet they must not therefore ceasse to reioyce in the Lord.

Let your patient minde be knowne vnto all men. He hath

already taught, howe men ought to behaue them selues toward God, namely that they must serue him with a cheerfull hart and continuall ioy: now he declareth in few wordes, how the beleeuers ought to behaue them selues toward men, saying: Let your patient mind be knowne vnto all men. Which wordes are thus much in effect: Be ioyful toward God, alwaies reioycing in & of him, but toward men be of a patiẽt mind, & pliant, applying your selues to all, & so behauing your selues, that ye be ready to do and suffer all things, & to yeeld in euery thing, as much as may be by any meanes without transgressing the commaundement of God, whereby ye may approue your selues to all men, and please all in that which is good: not onely hurting none, but also taking in good worth all things of al men, interpreting aright the sayings of al men, & accepting them in ŷ better part, that mẽ may plainly see you to be them, vnto whom all things are alike, which take in good part whatsoeuer betideth you, which stick in nothing, which would not disagree with any man for any cause, which be rich wt the rich, poore with the poore, reioycing with them that reioyce, weeping with them that weepe, & to be briefe, which be made all things to all men, that all men must needes acknowledge that ye are grieuous to none, but agreeable, of a patient mind, pliant, and obedient toward all in all thinges. The Greeke worde epieices which the Apostle here vseth, meaneth the same, which signifieth in our tongue a patient and pliant mind, whereby one doth so apply and shew him selfe indifferent to others, that he is the same to one that he is to an other, applying him selfe indifferently to the will of all, not requiring him selfe to be counted for a rule, whereunto the rest ought to apply and order them selues.

What it is to let our patient mind be knowne vnto all men.

An old Interpreter translateth it modestie, which, if thou vnderstand it aright, and not for the onely moderation & temperancie of meate and apparell, as it is wont commonly to be taken, is not altogither vnfitly translated, namely, if thou vnderstand it to be a vertue, whereby one thinking modestly of him self, endeuoureth to order and apply him selfe vnto all, according to the capacitie and abilitie of euery one, ready to permit, to take in good part, to obey, to giue place, to doe, to omit, to suffer all thinges, as he shall see it will profit his neighbour, albeit he must suffer hinderance and losse of his substance, name, and body thereby. That these thinges may be made more playne, it shall be

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good to declare them by examples. Paule 1. Cor. 9 writeth thus of him self: Vnto the Iewes I become as a Iew, that I may winne the Iewes: to them that are vnder the lawe, as though I were vnder the lawe: to them that are without lawe, as though I were without lawe (when I am not without lawe as pertaining to God, but am in the lavve through Christ) I am made all thinges to all men, that I might by all meanes saue some. Behold, thou seest here the patient & pliant minde rightly obseruing those things which are here commaunded. For those things that he writeth of him selfe haue this meaning: Sometimes he did eate, drinke, and doe all thinges as a Iewe, albeit it was not necessary that he should so doe: sometimes he did eate and drinke with the Gentiles, and did all thinges as free from the lawe. For onely faith in God, and loue toward our neighbour, are necessarily required, all other thinges are free, so that we may freely obserue them for one mans sake, & omit them for an other mans sake, as we shall perceiue it to be profitable to euery one.

An example of a patient minde in Paule.

Now it is contrary to this modestie or meekenes, if one hauing an impatient mind, trusteth to his owne wit, and contendeth that one thing among ỳ rest is necessary, which thou must either omit or obserue, and so applying him selfe vnto none, but contending to haue all other to apply them selues vnto him, he neglecteth & peruerteth the softnes & meekenes which is here taught, yea & the libertie of faith also: such some of the Iewes were, vnto whom we must giue no place, euen as Paule yeelded not vnto them. We see the same example commonly in Christ, but specially Matth. 12, & Mar. 2. where we reade that he suffered his Disciples to breake the Sabbath, & he him selfe also, when the case so required, did breake it, when it was otherwise, he did keepe it, whereof he gaue this reason: The Sonne of man is Lord, euen of the Sabbath. Which is as much to say as: the Sabbath is free, that thou mayst breake it for one mans sake and commoditie, and for the sake and commoditie of an other thou mayst keepe it. So Paule caused Timothe to be circumcised because of the Iewes, for that they thought that it was of importance to their saluation: againe he would not haue Titus circumcised, because certain Iewes did vniustly vrge it, so that ỳ circumcision of Titus would haue bene rather a confirmation of errour vnto them, then haue profited them any thing. Paule therefore would keepe circumci-

An impatient minde what it doth.

sion free, that he might sometime vse it, and sometime not vse it, as he should perceiue it to be commodious and profitable to euery one.

How the ordinaunces & decrees of men must be obserued or not obserued

So, to come to other matters, when the Pope commaundeth to make confession, to fast, to abstaine from, or vse this or that kind of meate, &c: and exacteth these thinges as necessary to saluation, they are to be vtterly contemned, and those thinges that are contrary to these, are most freely to be done: but if he should not commaund them as necessary, if any man might be holpen or edified in any thinge by the obseruation of them, surely they were to be obserued, but freely, and of loue onely, as also they are to be omitted, if the omitting of them may be profitable to any. The reason of this libertie is this: The Sonne of man is Lord of the Sabbath: if of the Sabbath, howe much more of the traditions of men? Whatsoeuer thou shalt obserue vpon this libertie, it can not hurt any, but to obserue them of necessitie, it extinguisheth faith and the Gospell. Likewise, if one liue as yet in a Monasterie, if he obserue the vowes and ordinaunces of that life vpon Christian libertie, and of loue to his brethren that he may edifie them, and of no necessitie, neither with the hinderance of his owne or other mens saluation, he shall doe godly, for he is free: but if those thinges be straitly required as necessary to saluation, then before thou suffer thy selfe to be brought into this errour, Monasteries, shauings, hoods, vowes, rules, ordinaunces, and all such like must be left, and the contrary must be done, to witnes, that onely faith and loue are necessary for a Christian, and that all other thinges are free, so that he may eyther omit or doe them for the edifying and cause of them with whom he liueth. Whatsoeuer thou shalt obserue vpon libertie and of loue, is godly: but if thou obserue any thing of necessitie it is vngodly. The same is to be sayd of all other ordinaunces and decrees of men, which are wont to be obserued in Monasteries, that whatsoeuer doth not disagree with the worde of God, thou mayst being free eyther obserue or omit it, according as thou shalt knowe it to be profitable and acceptable to them, with whom thou art conuersant: but if they be required as necessary, reiect them all vtterly, and tread them vnder thy feete.

Hereupon thou now seest, what a deuilish thing the Papacie & Monasteries be. For whatsoeuer things be free & to be permitted

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to free loue onely, they make them necessary, and say the keeping of them is of importance to saluation, wherby truely as much as is in them, they together peruert and extinguish the Gospell and faith. I passe ouer with silence, that they hereupon set and sell the care of the belly in steede of the seruice of God. For how many among them at this day do for Gods cause, & not rather for the bellies sake, take vpon them to be Monkes or Clerkes, do frequent the quier, sing, pray, say Masse, or doe any such thinge, wherin they counterfait and corrupt the true worship & seruice of God? The common subuersion of all Monasteries were the best reformation of all these thinges, from which so much discommoditie and no whit of profite may be looked for. Before one Monasterie could be perswaded concerning true Christian libertie, infinite thousands of soules in others should perish, wherefore forasmuch as they bringe no commoditie at all, neither is there any neede of them, and they are cause of greater hinderance to a Christian common weale, then can be thought, and can not by any meanes be reformed, what can be more profitable, then that they be vtterly ouerthrowne and abolished?

Christian liberty turned of the Papistes into meere necessitie.

Moreouer that we may admonish here concerning the ciuill Magistrate, when he commaundeth or requireth any thing, yea if he compel thereunto, we must obey, for there commeth no losse of Christian libertie or of faith hereby, forasmuch as they doe not contend that those thinges are necessary to saluation which they do ordaine or require, but onely to maintaine outward rule, publike tranquillitie and gouernment, & so the conscience remaineth free. Wherefore, forasmuch as it doth nothing hinder faith to do those things which the ciuill Magistrate commaundeth, but doth also profit the common weale, it shall be without dout a point of Christian obedience to endeuour to do them with a willing mind, that we may be such as are pliant & agreeable to all men, willing to doe all things, ready to deserue well of euery one, & to gratifie all. Howbeit if any should contend that those commaundements of the ciuill Magistrate be necessary to saluation, then, as it is sayd of the traditions of the Papistes, the contrary rather were to be done, or at the lest it were to be witnessed, that thou doost them onely for the common weales sake, because so it is profitable to others, and not, that thou mayst obtaine saluation by them, which we haue gotten by Christ Iesus alone, as many of vs as

Obedience to the ciuill Magistrate doth not hinder Christian libertie.

beleeue in him. According to this doctrine & the examples before mentioned euery one ought to behaue him selfe in euery thinge & toward all men, as Paule here teacheth, that he sticke not to his owne iudgement or right, but that he shew him selfe pliant vnto others, and haue regard of those thinges, which he shall knowe will be acceptable and profitable to his neighbours.

When therefore it doth nothing hinder thy faith, and profiteth thy neighbour to yeeld somewhat of thine owne right, if thou doe it not, thou art without charitie, & neglecteſt that Chriſtian ſoftnes & patient mind that Paule here ſpeaketh of: Yea if thou haſt regard hereof, as he that truly beleeueth in Chriſt ought to haue, thou muſt take it patiently euen when any man doth iniurie vnto thee, or endamage thee, and ſo interprete it in the better part, and alwaies think on that, which that Martyr when all his ſubſtance was taken from him, ſayd: But they ſhall not take away Chriſt from me. So whatſoeuer chaunceth vnto thee, ſay thou: I haue as yet ſuffered no loſſe of my faith, why ſhoulde I not take it in good parte, which my neighbour hath done? why ſhould I not yeeld vnto him, and apply my ſelfe to his will? Thou canſt ſcarce find a more manifeſt example hereof, then betweene two vnfeyned friendes: for as they behaue them ſelues one toward an other, ſo ought a Chriſtian to behaue him ſelfe toward euery one. Either of them endeuoreth to gratifie other, either of them giueth place to other, ſuffereth, doth, and omitteth whatſoeuer he ſeeth to be for the profite and commoditie of the other, & that freely without all conſtraint. Either of them doth diligently apply him ſelfe to the will of the other, neither of them compelleth other to follow his mind, & if one ſhould vſe the goods of an other, ỹ other would not be offended, but would take it in good part, and would not grudge rather to giue more, and that I may ſpeake briefly, betweene ſuch there is no exaction of lawe, no grudging, no conſtraint, no neceſſitie, but libertie, fauour and good will.

A moſt worthy ſaying of a right Chriſtian Martyr.

An example which Chriſtians ought to follow in behauing them ſelues toward their neighbours.

Contrariwiſe, ſuch as be impatient and obſtinate, which take nothing in good part of any man, but go about to make all things ſubiect to their owne will, and to order all thinges according to their owne iudgement, ſuch I ſay trouble the world, and are the cauſe of all diſcordes, contentions, warres, & whatſoeuer diſcommoditie there is, they ſay afterward, that they did thoſe thinges for the loue of iuſtice, and for that they endeuoured to defend that

The impatient & obſtinate are cauſe of much euill.

which

which is right. So that that heathen man sayd not amisse. Extreme rigour is extreme iniurie. And Salomon also sayth Eccles. 7. Be thou neither too righteous nor ouer wise. For as extreme rigour is extreme iniurie, so too great wisedom is extreme folly. Which also is meant by this common saying: when wise men dote they dote beyond measure. Surely if God should deale with vs according to right, we should perish in a moment, wherefore as Paule prayseth in him this moderation of right, and incomparable patience and gentlenes saying 2. Cor. 10: I beseech you by the meekenes and gentlenes of Christ, so is it also meete that we doe obserue a measure of our iudgement, right, wisedom, prudence, and in all thinges apply our selues to the profit & commoditie of others.

But let vs weie the wordes of the Apostle, for they are placed not without a spirituall skilfulnes, he sayth: Let your patient minde or softnes be knowne vnto all men. Where thou must not thinke that he commaundeth thee to be made knowne vnto all men, or that thou oughtest to tell thy patient mind or softnes before all men. For he sayth not, tell it forth, but let it be knowne, that is, endeuour to practize it toward men, I doe not commaund that ye should thinke or speake of it, but that ye labour that it may be knowne in deede, while all men doe trie and feele it, that no man may say any other thing of you, then that ye be of a patient minde, and pliant, applying your selues to all men, being enforced so to say euen by manifest experience. So that if any man were neuer so much bent to speake otherwise of you, his mouth might be stopped by ỹ testimonie of all other, witnessing of your patient mind and meekenes. So sayth Christ Matth. 5. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good workes, and glorifie your Father which is in heauen. And Peter sayth: Haue your conuersation honest among the Gentiles, that they which speake euill of you as of euill doers, may by your good workes, which they shall see, glorifie God in the day of visitation. It is not surely in our power, that our patient mind should be knowne and acknowledged of all men, but it shal be sufficient for vs, if we endeuour that all men may haue triall thereof in vs, and that no man may finde it wanting in our life.

How our patient minde must be made knowē vnto all men

1. Pet. 2.

Moreouer [all men] is not so to be taken, that thou shouldest vnderstand thereby all men which are in the world, but rather all

sortes of men, that we haue regard to be of a patient mind as wel toward enemies as friendes, as well toward seruaunts as Maisters, small as great, poore as rich, straungers as them at home, toward them that we know not, as toward them with whom we are familiar. For there are some, which behaue them selues very gentlely and patiently toward straungers, but toward them that are in the house with them, or with whome they alwayes keepe company, there are none more obstinate or froward then they. And how many are there, which at great and rich mens handes take all thinges in good part, interpret euery thinge at the best, and most gently beare, whatsoeuer they say or doe, but toward the poore and abiects they shewe no gentlenes or meekenes, neither take any thinge of them in good part. So we are all ready to doe for our children, parents, friends, & kinsmen, and most fauourably interprete and willingly beare whatsoeuer they haue committed. Howe often doe we euen prayse the manifest vices of our friend, or at the least winke at them, and apply our selues most fitly vnto them? but to our enemies & aduersaries we impart none of this fauour, in them we can find nothing that is good, nothing that is to be borne, nothing that can be interpreted in the better part, but we dispraise euery thing, & take it at the worst. Against such parted and vnperfect patient mindes Paule here speaketh saying: Let your patient mind be knowne vnto all men: he will haue our patient mind and right Christian meekenes to be perfect and entire toward all, whether they be enemies or friendes, he will haue vs suffer and take in good part all things of all men, without all respect either of persons or deserts. And such without dout will our patient mind be, if it be true and not counterfet: no otherwise then gold remaineth gold, whether a godly or vngodly man possesse it, and the siluer, which Judas, who betraied the Lorde, had, was not turned into ashes, but remayned that which it was, as truely all the good creatures of God, whosoeuer haue them, doe continue toward all thinges, that which they are: So a patient mind which is syncere comming of the spirit, continueth like it selfe, whether it light vpon enemies or friends, poore men or rich. But our nature which is full of deceit & plainly corrupt, doth so behaue it selfe, as if that which is gold in the hande of Peter, were turned into a role in the hande of Judas, and it is wont to be patient and plyant toward riche men, great perso-

The most part are ready to make their patient mind known to the rich and their friendes, but not to the poore and their enemies.

sonages, straungers, freinds, and not toward euerie one, wherefore it is false, vaine, lying, hypocriticall, and nothing but deceit and mockerie before God. Hereof now learne how vnpossible sound and entire, that is, spirituall meeknes and a patient minde is vnto nature, and how few there be which marke this euell, by reason of that deceitfull meekenes and patient minde, though in outward shew verie goodly, which they shew vnto certaine, thinking that they do well and iustly, in that they are more hard and impatient toward some. For so their defiled and filthie nature teacheth them, by her goodly reason, which alwayes iudgeth and doeth against the spirit and those thinges that are of the spirit, because as Paul sayth: Rom. 8: They that are after the flesh, sauour the thinges of the flesh.

But to conclude, it is manifest that the Apostle hath comprehended in these few wordes the whole life worthy of a Christian, which he ought to leade toward his neighbour. For he that is of a patient minde, pliant and meeke in deede, studieth to deserue well of all men, as well concerning the body as concerning the soule, as well in deede as in wordes, and doth also beare with a most patient minde, the offences and malice of others. Where such a minde is, there is also loue, ioye, peace, long suffering, gentlenes, goodnes, & what soeuer is the frute of the spirit Gal. 5. But here flesh murmureth: If we should endeuour to be so meeke and patient, saith the flesh, that we should take all things in good part of all men, it would come to passe, that no mā should be able to keepe a peece of breade safely & in peace for the vniust which would abuse our meekenes & patiēt mind, they would take away all things, yea they would not suffer vs to liue. Marke how comfortably & aboundātly the Apostle doth satisfie this distrusting & foolish cogitation, euen from this place vnto the ende of this text.

The Lord is at hand. As though he said: if there were no Lord or no God, one might feare, when by his meekenes and patient minde he compteth all thinges alike, and taketh all thinges in good part, that that would be damage and hurt vnto him, but now there not onely is a Lord, which gouerneth all things most iustly, but he is also at hand, he can not forget or forsake thee, be thou onely of a patient minde and gentle toward all, let him haue the care of thee, nourish, and preserue thee. He hath giuen Christ the eternall good, how should not he also giue thinges necessarie

We must make our patient mynde knowen vnto all without feare least any abuse it to our hurt & hinderance.

for the belly? He hath farre more, then can be taken away from thee, and thou forasmuch as thou hast Christ, hast much more then the whole world. Hereunto pertaineth that which is saide Psal. 55: Cast thy burden vpon the Lord, and he shall nourish thee. And 1. Pet. 5: Cast all your care on him: for he careth for you. And Christ sayth Matth. 6: Behold the foules of the aier and lilies of the field, &c. all which agree with the present consolation of the Apostle, and haue the same meaning which these wordes here haue: The Lord is at hand.

Christians must not be carefull, but must cast their care on God who careth for them.

Be nothing carefull. That is, take no care at all for your selues, let God care for you, whoe knoweth and is able to do it, whom ye haue now knowne that he is good and gracious. The heathen haue not without a cause care of this present life, inasmuch as they are ignorant and do not beleeue that they haue a God who hath care of all, as Christ Matth. 6. said: Be not carefull for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drinke: nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on: for after all these thinges seeke the Gentiles, but your heauenly Father knoweth, that ye haue neede of all these thinges. Wherefore let the whole world take from thee, and do thee iniurie, thou shalt alwayes haue sufficient, and it can not be that thou shouldest perish with any aduersitie, vnles they haue first taken from thee thy God, but who can take him from thee, if thou thy selfe doost not cast him of? There is no cause therefore that we should be carefull, seing that he is our father and prouideth for vs, which hath all thinges in his own hand, euen those, which seeme to take away those things that be ours from vs, and to endamage and hurt vs wherein soeuer they are able. But we haue exceeding great cause alwayes to reioyce in the Lord, when we are of a patient mynde toward all men, forasmuch as we are certaine, if so be that we beleeue, that it can by no meanes come to passe, that good thinges should be wanting vnto vs, hauing Almighty God our fauourable and carefull father: whom they that haue not, let vs suffer them to be troubled with carke and care. It ought to be our onely care, how we may be voyde of care, and be found alwayes ioyfull in God, and meeke and of a patient mynde toward men. So without dout we shall trie that which Dauid tried saying: I haue been young & now am olde, and yet saw I neuer the righteous forsaken, nor his seede begging their bread. And that which

Psal. 37. 25.

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he sayth Psal. 40: The Lord careth for me.

But in all thinges let your requestes be shewed vnto God in prayer & supplication with giuing of thankes. In these wordes the Apostle teacheth, how our care is to be cast vpon God, and the meaning of that which he sayth is this: Onely be not carefull, but if any thing chaunce, which may make you carefull (as in deede innumerable such are wont to come vnto those that liue in the world) so behaue your selues, that ye attempt nothing at all with your care, what soeuer that shalbe which chaunceth vnto you, but casting of care, turne your selues with prayer and supplication vnto God, and desire him that he will bring to passe and finish that which your selues otherwise should in vaine haue attempted with your care to accomplish. Howbeit desire this with giuing of thankes, forasmuch as ye haue such a God as hath care of you, and vnto whom ye may safely commit all carke and care for you. But he that will not so behaue himselfe when any thing happeneth, but will first wepe all thinges by his owne reason, and order them according to his owne iudgement, and so take to himselfe the care of his thinges, he shall wrap himselfe in innumerable discommodities, he shall lose all ioy and quietnes thereby, and yet shall preuaile nothing, but labour in vaine, & plunge himselfe so much more in troubles and miseries, that he shall not be able to escape out of them againe, which we learne daily both by our owne and by other mens experience. Now that which Paule here admonisheth concerning prayer tendeth vnto this end, lest that any man should neglect all thinges & commit them to God, and he himselfe sleepe and do nothing at *all*, no not so much as once pray for them: for he that should vse *this* slouthfulnes, albeit he were now quiet, shall easily be wrapped in cares, whereof he shall not be able to ridde himselfe: we must do our endeuour and not sleepe, and therefore it is that many thinges be incident, which are wont to bring carefulnes, whereby we might be as it were compelled to pray vnto God. Wherefore Paule hath not in vaine ioyned togither these two: Be nothing carefull, and: In all thinges let your requestes be shewed vnto God in prayer and supplication with giuing of thankes. Nothing and All do in deede greatly differ, howbeit the Apostle therefore put them togither, that he might signifie that it can not be, but that many and innumerable thinges be incident, which are wont to

How ỹ godly must cast their care vpon God.

bring carke and care, but that in all them we ought to admit no carefulnes, but alwayes flie vnto prayer, and commit them all vnto God, & desire of him those thinges whereof we haue neede.

Now we must here see how our prayer must be framed, and what is the true maner of praying. The Apostle setteth downe foure thinges, prayer, supplication, giuing of thinkes, and requests or petitions. Prayer is those wordes or speche, wherein as sometimes some thing is desired, so also other thinges are declared, as is the Lordes Prayer and the Psalmes. Supplication is, when the petition is vrged or made more earnest by some thing, as when one prayeth for his father, or for some other thinge which is deare and excellent vnto him, as when we praye vnto God by his mercy, by his sonne, by his promise, by his name, &c. As Salomon Psal. 132: Lord remember Dauid, and all his trouble. And Paule Rom. 12: I beseech you by the mercies of God. And 2. Cor. 10: I beseech you by the mekenes and gentlenes of Christ, &c. A petition or request is, when we name that which is desired, and for which prayer and supplication is made, as in the Lordes Prayer, all that composition of wordes is called prayer, but those seuen thinges for which we pray, as, halowed be thy name, thy kingdome come, &c. are petitions. According to that saying Matth. 7: Aske, and it shalbe giuen you: seeke, and ye shall synde: knocke, and it shalbe opened vnto you. For whosoeuer asketh, receiueth: and he that seeketh findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shalbe opened. Giuing of thankes is when the benefites of God are rehearsed, whereby faith in God is strengthened, and stirred vp so much more confidently to looke for that which is desired, & for which we do praie. Wherefore prayer vrgeth or earnestly asketh by supplication, but is strengthened and made sweete & acceptable by giuing of thankes, and so by this strength and sweetnes it preuaileth, and obtaineth, what soeuer it asketh. This maner of prayer we read to haue bin vsed in the Church, and among the holy fathers of the old Testament, which were wont alwayes in their prayers to aske with supplication and giuing of thankes. The same also we see in the Lordes Prayer, which beginneth with giuing of thankes and with prayse, when as euen in the beginning thereof we confes God a father, vnto whom the godly mynde hath accesse by his fatherly loue and by the loue of his sonne, vnto which sup-

Prayer.

Supplicatiō.

A petition or requeſt.

Giuing of thankes.

supplication nothing may be compared, wherefore it is both the best and most excellent prayer of all which may be had.

The mystery of the golden censer declared.

Moreouer in these wordes Paule hath verie well expressed the mysterie of the golden censer of the old Testament, whereof we read many thinges in the bookes of Moses. It was lawfull for the Priestes only to burne incense, now all we which beleeue in Christ, are Priestes, wherefore it is lawfull for all vs, and for vs onely to burne the incense of prayers. The censer that golden vessel, is the wordes which we vtter in prayer, surely golden and precious, as those are, whereof the Lordes prayer consisteth, the Psalmes and other prayers of the Scripture. For commonly in the Scripture vessels signifie wordes, for that our meaninges are contained in wordes as in a vessell, and by wordes are vttered and receiued as out of a vessell, as wine, water, burning coles, and such like, are contained in vessels, and taken out of vessels. So by the cuppe of Babylon Apoc. 17. the doctrine of men is vnderstood, and by the cuppe wherein the blood of Christ is dronke the Gospell.

What is signified by the burning coles, whereon the incense was layde.

Furthermore burning coles, whereupon the frankincense was layde, signifie giuing of thankes, and rehearsing of benefites in prayer, which we are wont to do in making supplication. For, that by fierie coles benefites are signified it is manifest euen out of the 12. to the Rom. where the Apostle reciteth the saying of Salomon Prouerb. 25: If thine enemie hunger, feede him: if he thirst, giue him drinke: for in so doing thou shalt heape coles of fire on his head. And benefits may be rightly called coles of fire, forasmuch as they inflame the heart with loue, although it be cold. In the Lawe it was prohibited to laye the frankincense vpon any other coles, but them that were of the altar of ỹ Lord, which signifieth, that we must not rehearse our own good deedes in prayer, as that Pharise did, Luc. 15: but onely the benefits of God bestowed vpon vs in Christ. He is our altar, by him we must offer, for the benefits receiued by him we must giue thākes, and make mention of them in prayer for the increasing of our faith. This Paule teacheth Coloss. 3. where he sayth: Do all thinges in the name of the Lord Iesus, giuing thankes to God the Father by him. For God can not suffer, that thou shouldest glorie of any thing els in his sight, which he declared in a type or figure Leuit. 10, where we read that Nadab and Abihu the

We must giue thankes to God by Christ.

sonnes of Aaron were taken and consumed of the flame from the altar of God, because they burned incense taking other fire then of the altar of the Lord. The workes of Christ only are acceptable to God, wherefore for these onely we must both giue thankes and reioyce in prayer.

The petitiõs made in prayer signified by the incẽse layd on the burning coles.

The incense signifieth the petitions made in prayer. For petitions are, whereof prayer consisteth, and which ascend vnto God, according as Paul sayth: Let your petitions be shewed vnto God, wherein he seemeth to haue considered and interpreted them as a sauour ascending from the censer. As though he had said: when ye will burne incense sweete and acceptable vnto the Lord, make, that your petitions be shewed vnto God with supplication and giuing of thankes, this incense and this sauour as it is most sweete vnto God, so doth it ascend straight vnto heauen, like vapoures of smoke, and entreth euen vnto the throne of God. And as burning coles do giue a strong sauour and make it ascend vpward: so the memorie of the benefites of God, which we rehearse by giuing of thankes, and whereof we do as it were aduertize God and our selues, doth make prayer stedfast and bold, which cheerefully and gladly ascendeth into heauen, without which truly prayer fainteth, is cold and of no force. Wherefore whosoeuer thou art, before thou pray with faith and effectually, thy heart must be inflamed with the memorie of the benefits, which God hath bestowed vpon vs in Christ.

But perhaps some man will demaund, how our petitions be shewed or become manifest vnto God, seeing that they be not onely knowne vnto him before we praye, but he also doth send vs that, which we aske? Whereunto I aunswere: the Apostle adioyned this, that he might teach, of what sort true prayer ought to be, to wit, assured and hauing confidence and trust in God, which passeth not away into the winde, neither is made at aduenture, as their prayer is, which pray, and haue no regard, whether God heareth or not, yea rather beleeue that he doth not heare, which vndoutedly is not to praye or to aske of God, but to tempt and mocke God. For if any man did desire money of me, whom I certainly knew, not to perswade himselfe that he should receiue it, I could not suffer such an asker, of whom I might assure my selfe to be mocked: how much more is God offended at our much crying out and babbling, when we do continually

We must not praye at aduenture but be certainly perswaded that we shall be heard of God.

nually babble much & crie out, & do not thinke at all whether he heareth vs. Learne therefore here, that they petitions must be shewed vnto God, that is, that thou must so aske, that thou dout not, that they petitions be knowne and accepted of God, and beleeue certainly, that thou shalt obtaine what soeuer thou doest aske, with which faith if thou be endued, it shall so come vnto thee in deede. For as we beleeue, so it commeth vnto vs. Wherefore, as the smoke carieth the sauour vpward from the censer: so faith carieth the petitions of the beleeuers into the sight of God, whereby we assuredly beleeue, that our petitions shall come vnto God, and that we shall vndoutedly obteine those thinges that we aske. Paul by these wordes [be shewed] did vndoutedly meane that, which is eftsoones in the Psalmes: God hath heard my petition, Giue eare Lord vnto my prayer, and such like. Hereof Christ speaketh Matth. 21, and Mar. 11. Whatsoeuer ye shall aske in prayer, if ye beleeue, ye shall receiue it. And James saith chap. 1: Aske in faith and wauer not, for he that wauereth shall receiue nothing of the Lord. Who may not now hereof perceiue, that that much babbling and crying out, which is made commonly through the world in monasteries, is a mocking and deluding of God? The prayers of these, if they may be called prayers, are abundantly shewed before men, for they crie out and babble too much, but there is no regard of them with God, they are not knowne of him, neither come they vnto his eares, that is, he doth by no meanes heare them, for that they do not beleeue, or are assured, that their crying out or much babbling is heard of God, wherefore as they beleeue, so do they receiue. It was time therefore long since, that those mockinges and blasphemies of God should be abolished. But if we praye as we are here taught, there shalbe nothing surely which we may not obtaine. Now we praye for many things continually, and receiue nothing, neither is it any meruell, seeing we praye so, that our petitions be not shewed vnto God, for that we do not beleeue that they be manifest vnto him. Woe to our diffidence and incredulitie.

How our petitions are shewed vnto God.

Why we oftētimes praie and receiue not.

And the peace of God which passeth all vnderstanding, shall preserue your hearts and myndes in Christ Iesus. In how goodly an order doth Paul here instruct a Christian man? First he teacheth him to be glad and ioyfull in the Lord by faith: secondly to shew himselfe meeke and gentle to all his neighbours. And if

thou say, how can I do that without losse or hinderance? he answereth: The Lord is at hand. If thou againe obiect: But what if men persecute me, and euen bereue me of that I haue? He addeth: be nothing carefull, but let thy petitions be shewed vnto God. Where if the flesh againe murmur, what if in the meane season I be oppressed and spoiled? he concludeth that there shalbe nothing lesse, the peace of God shall preserue and keepe thee, whereof I must now entreat somewhat. By the peace of God is not meant here that peace, whereby God is peaceable and quiet in himselfe, but that which he giueth vnto vs, and poureth into our heartes, euen as also it is called the word of God which he giueth vs, that we may preache it and beleeue it. So when he giueth this peace vnto vs, it is called the peace of God, euen because we haue the same with him, when in the world notwithstanding we suffer affliction.

The peace of God.

Now this peace passeth all vnderstanding, reason, and knowledge of man: which is not so to be vnderstood, as though man can not at all perceiue or know it, for if we haue peace with God, truly it must be felt in our heart and conscience, otherwise our heartes and myndes could not be preserued by it, but it is thus to be vnderstood: When tribulation commeth vpon them, which know not to flie vnto God with prayer and supplication, but trust to their owne wisedome and care, whereby they seeke peace, but that which reason is able to know, which is that, whereby tribulation taketh an end, and is chaunged with outward tranquillitie: this peace doth not passe reason, but is agreable vnto it, inasmuch as it is sought and found out of it. Wherefore they that are voyd of fayth are exceedingly disquieted, and troubled vntill according to the reason of the flesh they obtaine this peace by heardly deliuering or ridding themselues of aduersitie, not regarding whether they bring that to passe by force or by crafte, as he that hath receiued a wound seeketh to haue it healed, &c. But they that reioyce syncerely in the Lord, it is sufficiēt for them, that they know that they haue God fauourable vnto them, and haue assured peace with him, they abyde willingly in tribulation, being nothing carefull for that peace of reason by the remouing of outward troubles, but they endure them valiantly, looking to be strengthned inwardly by faith, taking no care whether the aduersities which they suffer, shall remaine a

The peace which the faithfull enioy.

short

shoꝛt oꝛ a long time, whether they shalbe tempoꝛall oꝛ cõtinuing, neither are disquieted with caring what ende they shall haue. They cõmit all things to God, seeking not to know, when, how, where, oꝛ by whom he wil giue them quietnes. Wherefoꝛe God againe sheweth them this fauour, that he maketh the end of their triall to be such, and with so great commodite, as no man could either suspect oꝛ wish foꝛ. Loe, this is that peace of the crosse, the peace of God, the peace of conscience, true Christian peace, which maketh that a man outwardly also, as much as is in him, liueth quietly and peaceably with all men, & troubleth no man. This peace reason is not able by any meanes to know oꝛ comprehend, that a man vnder the crosse may haue quietnes of minde and ioy of heart, and peace euen in the very inuasion of his enemies: this is the gift and woꝛke of God, knowen to none, but to him that hath it, and hath tried it.

Whereas Paul said: Now the God of hope fill you with all ioy & peace in beleeuing, that which he calleth in these woꝛdes, peace in beleeuing, he calleth in our pꝛesent text ꝓ peace of God. Moꝛeouer Paul signifieth in these woꝛdes, that whosoeuer will reioyce in the Loꝛd by faith, and be meeke and of a patient minde toward all by loue, the Deuell vndoutedly is against him, and will raise vp some crosse, that he may driue him from so Christian a purpose, wherefoꝛe the Apostle will haue euerie one to be pꝛepared against this assault of Satan, and to place his peace there where Satan can not trouble it, namely in God, and not thinke how he may cast of the crosse, but suffer the aduersarie to rake on, and rage as he list, he in the meane season patiently looking foꝛ the Loꝛd, that he comming may make an ende of aduersitie and trouble: foꝛ by this meanes his mynde, heart and conscience are pꝛeserued and kept in peace. Neither can patience endure, where the heart is not confirmed with this peace, foꝛ that he only which hath this peace doth throughly perswade himselfe that God is fauourable vnto him, & carefull foꝛ him, and maketh no accompt what chaunceth vnto him from creatures. Moꝛeouer let no man vnderstand here the heartes and mindes to be the will and knowledge of nature, but as Paule himselfe interpꝛeteth, the heartes and mindes in Christ Iesu, that is, such as we haue in Christ, of Christ, and vnder Christ. These are the heartes and mindes which faith and loue cause, with which they that be endued, do

Rom. 15. 13.

The Deuell laboureth to hinder and stay the godly procedings of the faithfull.

behaue themselues most godly toward God, and most louingly and gently toward their neighbour. Toward God they so behaue themselues, that they beleeue in him, and loue him with their whole heart, and are also most ready, with their whole heart and with all their cogitations to do those thinges which shalbe acceptable to God and their neighbours, as much as, yea more then they are able. Such heartes and mindes the Deuell goeth about with the feare of death and other troubles to terrifie and driue from this godlines, erecting a false hope there against by the deuises and imaginations of men, wherewith the minde is seduced, that it may seeke to be comforted and holpen of it selfe or other creatures, which if it do, surely he hath drawne such a man from the care of God, and wrapped him in his owne vaine care.

Thus hast thou godly reader, out of this short text a most plentifull instruction of Christian life, how thou must liue toward God and thy neighbour, namely that thou must beleeue that God is all thinges vnto thee, and thou againe must be all thinges vnto thy neighbours, that thou must shewe thy selfe such a one to thy neighbour, as God hath shewed himselfe to thee, that thou must receiue of God and giue to thy neighbour: All which are contained in faith and loue, the whole summe of all Christianitie.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, CONCERNING THEM THAT BE VNDER THE Law, and them that be vnder Grace.

Gal. 4.

Verse 1. THen I saye, that the heire as long as he is a childe, differeth nothing from a seruaunt, though he be Lord of all,

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2. But is vnder tuters and gouerners, vntill the time appointed of the father.
3. Euen so, we when we were children, were in bondage vnder the rudiments of the world.
4. But when the fulnes of time was come, God sent forth his Sonne made of a woman, and made vnder the Lawe,
5. That he might redeeme them which were vnder the Lawe, that we might receiue the adoption of the sonnes.
6. And because ye are sonnes, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Sonne into your hearts, which cryeth, Abba, Father.
7. Wherefore now thou art not a seruaunt, but a sonne: if thou be a sonne, thou art also an heire of God through Christ.

THis text toucheth the very pith of Paules chiefe doctrine, the cause why it is well vnderstood of so few, is not, for that it is so obscure and hard, but because there is almost no knowledge of faith left in the world, without which it can not be that one should rightly vnderstand Paule, who euerie where intreateth of faith with such force of the spirit as he is able. I must therefore speake somewhat, that this text may be made plaine, and that I may more conueniently bring light vnto it in expounding it, I will speake a few wordes in maner of a preface. First therefore we must vnderstād that that treatise, wherein is intreated of good workes, doth farre differ from that wherein is intreated of iustification, as there is verie great difference betweene the substance and the working, betweene a man & his worke. Now iustification is of man, and not of workes: for man is either iustified and saued, or iudged and condemned, and not workes. Neither is it in controuersie among the godly, that man is iustified by no worke, but righteousnes must come vnto him from some other where, then from his owne workes. For Moses writeth of Abel after this sort: The Lord had respect vnto Abel, and to

God first regardeth the man, and the the worke.

his oblation. First he had respect to Abel himselfe, then to his oblation, because that Abel was first counted righteous, entire, and acceptable vnto God, and then for his sake his oblation also was alowed, and not he because of his oblation. Againe, God had no respect to Cain, and therefore neither to his oblation: where againe thou seest, that regard is had first of the worker the of the worke. Of this place it is verie plainly gathered, that no worke can be allowed of God, whereas he which worketh that worke, was not first acceptable to him: and againe, that no worke is disalowed of him, vnles the authour thereof be disallowed before. I thinke that these thinges wilbe sufficient concerning this matter in this place, of which it is easie to vnderstand, that there are two sortes of workes: some going before iustification, and some following it, and that these last are good workes in deede, but that those other do onely appeare to be good. Hereof commeth such disagreemēt betweene God, and those counterfect holy ones, for this cause nature and reason rise and rage against the holy Ghost, this is that whereof almost all the whole Scripture intreateth. The Lord in his word defineth, that all workes that goe before iustification, are euell, and of no importance, and requireth that man himselfe before all thinges be iustified.

Man before he is regenerate can doe nothing that is good.

Againe, he pronounceth all men, which are not yet regenerate, and haue not chaunged that nature, which they receiued of their parentes, with the newe creature of Christ, to be vnrighteous and wicked, according to that saying Psal. 116: All men are lyars, that is, vnable to performe their dutie, and to doe those thinges, which by right they ought. And Gen. 6: The heart of man is alwayes ready vnto euell, whereby vndoutedly it commeth to passe, that he is able to do nothing that is good, which hath the fountaine of actions, that is his heart, corrupted. And if he do many workes which in outward shew seeme good, they are no better then the oblation of Cain.

God hath regard first to ỹ worker then to ỹ worke, reason doth quite cōtrarie, affirming that by his workes the worker is iustified.

Here against commeth forth reason our reuerend maistres seeming to her selfe meruelous wise, yet in deede is vnwise and blynde, and is not ashamed to gainsay her God, & to reproue him of lying, she being furnished with her follies and verie strawie armour, to wit, the light of nature, free will, the strength of nature, also with the bookes of the heathen and with the doctrines of men. She dareth with her euell sounding stringes make a noyce

noyce against God, that the woꝛkes of a man euen not yet iuſtified, are good woꝛkes, and not woꝛkes like vnto Cains, (which God pꝛonounceth) yea and ſo good, that he that woꝛketh them is iuſtified by them. Foꝛ ſo Ariſtotle hath taught, that he that woꝛketh well is made good. Unto this ſaying ſhe leaneth and ſticketh vnmoueably, and wreſteth the Scripture cleane contrarie, contending that God will haue reſpect firſt to the woꝛkes, thē to the woꝛker. Such verie deuelish doctrine beareth the ſway now euerie where in ſcholes, colledges & monaſteries, wherein no other ſaincts, then Cain was, haue rule and authoꝛitie. Now of this errour an other immediatly ſpꝛingeth. They which attribute ſo much to woꝛkes, & do not accoꝛdingly eſteeme the woꝛker and ſound iuſtification, go ſo farre, that they aſcribe all merit and ſoueraigne righteouſnes to woꝛkes done befoꝛe iuſtification, making almoſt no account of faith, alleaging that which James ſaith, that without woꝛkes it is dead. Which ſentence of the Apoſtle when they litle vnderſtand, they attribute almoſt nothing to faith, they alwapes ſticke to woꝛkes, whereby they thinke they do merit exceedingly of God, and are perſwaded that foꝛ their woꝛkes ſake they ſhall obtaine the fauour of God, and by this meanes do they continually diſagree with God, ſhewing themſelues to be the right poſteritie of Cain. God hath reſpect vnto man, theſe to the woꝛkes of man: God alloweth the woꝛkes foꝛ his ſake that woꝛketh, theſe require that foꝛ the woꝛkes ſake the woꝛker map be crowned. Now God goeth not from his ſentence, as it is meete and iuſt, and theſe will ſeeme nothing leſſe thē to erre in any reſpect. They will not haue their good woꝛkes contemned, reaſon to be nothing eſteemed, free will to be counted vneffectuall, oꝛ ſurely, if thou doeſt here ſtriue againſt them, they beginne to be angrie with God, and count it a ſmall matter to kill their bꝛother Abel.

But here perhaps thou wilt ſay: what is needfull to be done? by what meanes ſhall I firſt of all become righteous, and acceptable to God? How ſhall I attaine to this perfect iuſtification? The Goſpell aunſwereth, pꝛeaching that it is neceſſarie that thou heare Chꝛiſt, and repoſe thy ſelfe wholy in him, denying thy ſelfe, & diſtruſting all thine owne ſtrength. By this meanes thou ſhalt be chaunged from Cain to Abel, & being thy ſelfe acceptable, ſhalt offer acceptable giftes to the Loꝛd. This faith, as

it is preached vnto thee for no merit of thine owne, so is it giuen vnto thee for no deseruing of thine, but of meere grace. And this faith iustifieth thee, thou being endued herewith the Lord remitteth all thy synnes, and that by the contemplation of Christ his sonne, in whom this faith beleeueth and trusteth. Moreouer he giueth vnto such a faith his spirit, which doth throughly chaunge a man and make him new, so that now he hath other reason, and an other will, then before, namely that which is ready vnto good. Such a one worketh nothing but good workes, neither can it be but good, which he being good before, shall do, whereof I haue spoken somewhat before. Wherefore nothing els is required vnto iustificatiō, then to heare Iesus Christ our Sauiour, and to beleeue in him, howbeit neither of these is the worke of nature, but both of onely grace. He therefore that goeth about to attaine hereunto by workes, shutteth the way to the Gospell, to faith, grace, Christ, God, and all thinges that helpe vnto saluation. Againe, vnto good workes there is neede onely of iustification, which he that hath attained, doth worke onely good workes, and beside such a one none. Hereof it sufficiētly appeareth, that the beginning, the thinges following, and the order of mans saluation are after this sort. First of all is required, that thou heare the word of God, next that thou beleeue, then that thou do worke, & so at the last become saued and happie. He which chaungeth this order, without doute is not of God. Paul also describeth this order Rom. 10, saying: VVhosoeuer shall call vpon the Name of the Lord, shalbe saued. But how shal they call on him, in whom they haue not beleeued? and how shall they beleeue in him, of whom they haue not heard? and how shall they heare without a preacher? and how shal they preach, except they be sent? Therefore Christ teacheth vs to pray the Lord of the harueſt, that he would send forth labourers into his harueſt, that is, syncere preachers. Whē we heare these preach the true word of God, we may beleeue, which faith iustifieth a man, and maketh him godly in deede, that he now calleth vpon God in the spirit of the sonnes, and worketh nothing but that which is good, and thus becōmeth a man saued. Which is no other thing, then if I say: He that beleeueth shalbe saued. Againe, he that worketh without faith is condemned, as Christ saith: He that doth not beleeue shalbe condemned, from which no workes shall deliuer him.

What is required to iustification.

Con-

Confer now herewith those things which are wont commonly to be spoken of honestie and righteousnes. Are they not wont thus to say? I will endeuour, that I may yet become honest. It is meete surely that we study to lead an honest life and to do good workes. Well, admit this to be so. But if one thē aske them how we may applie our selues vnto honestie, and by what meanes we may attaine vnto it: they answere, that we must fast, praie, frequent temples, auoide synnes &c. Hereupon one becommeth a Charterhouse Monke, an other chooseth some other order of monkes: an other is consecrated a Priest: some tormēt their flesh by wearing heare cloth: other scourge their bodies with whipps, other afflict themselues after other sorts. But these are euen of Cains broode, & their workes are no whit better then ꝑ workes of Cain. For the man himselfe continueth the same that he was before, vngodly, and without all iustification: there is a certaine chaunge made only of outward workes, of apparell, of places &c. Neither are these any other thē very apes of saincts, for they do preposterously imitate the maners & workes of saincts, when as they themselues are nothing lesse thē saincts. They scarce thinke of faith, they presume onely of such workes as seeme good vnto thēselues, thinking by thē to come vnto heauen. Of whom Christ said: Enter in at the straight gate: for I say vnto you, many seeke to enter in at it, & can not. Why is this? because they know not what this narrow gate is. For it is faith, which doth altogither annihilate or make a man nothing in his owne eyes, & requireth ꝑ he put no trust in any of his owne works, but that he leane only to ꝑ grace of God, & be prepared for it to leaue & suffer all things. But those holy ones of Cains broode thinke their good workes to be the narrow gate, & are not therefore extenuated, or made lesse, whereby they might enter: they do not leaue confidence in their workes, but gathering them togither in great coules, they hang them about them, and so go about to enter in being burdened, and as it were swollen bigge, which is as possible for them, as for a camell with his bounched backe to go through ꝑ eye of a needle.

Hypocriticall & counterfet holines.

Whē thou shalt begin to preach vnto these of faith, they laugh and hisse at thee: Doest thou count vs, say they, for Turkes and Heathen, whom it behoueth now first to learne faith? Is there such a companie of Priests, Monkes and Nunnes, & is not faith knowne? Who knoweth not what he ought to beleeue? euen ma-

nifest synners know that. And being after this sort animated and stirred vp, they thinke that they be aboundantly endued with faith, and that the rest is now to be finished & made perfect by workes. Whereupon they make too small & slender account of faith, as I haue said, because they are ignorant both what faith is, & that it alone doth iustifie. They call it faith, when they beleeue those things which they haue heard of Christ, which kynde of faith the Deuels also haue, & yet are nothing therefore iustified: but this deserueth to be called rather an opinion of men then fayth. For as we do oftentimes admonish, it is not sufficient, that thou maiest worthely be called a Christian, to beleeue those things to be true, which are preached of Christ, which kinde of faith they of Cains
A true faith. broode also haue: but thou must also nothing doute, that thou art of the number of them, vnto whom all those benefits of Christ are giuen & exhibited. Which he that beleeueth, must plainly confes, that he is holy, godly, righteous, the sonne of God, and certaine of saluation, & that by no merit of his owne, but by the only mercy of God poured forth vpon him for Christes sake. Which he beleeueth to be so rich and plentifull, as it is in deede, that although he be as it were drowned in synnes, he is notwithstãding thereby made holy & the sonne of God. Whereof if he should any thing doute, he should procure exceeding ignominie & reproch to baptisme which he hath receiued, & to ỹ Lords supper, & also reproue ỹ word & grace of God of falshood. Therefore take heede that thou nothing doute, that thou art ỹ sonne of God, & therefore righteous, by his grace, let all feare & care be here awaye. Howbeit thou must feare & tremble that thou maist persteuer such a one vnto ỹ end: Thou must not being in this case, be careful that thou maist become righteous & saued, but that thou maist persteuer and cõtinue. Neither must thou do this, as though it cõsisted in thine owne strẽgth: for all thy righteousnes & saluation is of only grace, whereunto only thou must trust: But whẽ thou knowest that it is of grace alone, & that they faith also is the gift of God, thou shalt for good cause liue in feare & care, lest that any tẽtatiõ do violẽtly moue thee frõ this faith. Hereunto pertaineth that which is written in the 9. chap. of Ecclesiastes: The righteous & wise, yea and their seruaunts also are in the hãd of God, & there is no man that knoweth either loue or hate, but all things are before thẽ. It happeneth vnto one as vnto an other, &c. For ỹ present time euery

one

one by faith is certaine of his saluation, but constantly to stand and perseuer, as it is the gift of the Lord, and not in our owne strength, so ought we alwayes to haue a care and feare thereof.

Whē they of Cains broode heare faith to be entreated of after this sort, they can not sufficiently maruell at our madnes, as it seemes vnto them. God turne this away from me, say they, that I should affirme my selfe holy and godly, farre be this arrogancie and rashnes from me. I am many wayes a miserable sinner, I should be mad, if I should arrogate holines vnto my selfe. And thus they mocke at true faith, and count such doctrine as this for execrable errour, and goe about with might and mayne to extinguish the Gospell. These are they that deny the faith of Christ, & persecute it in the whole world, of whom Paule speaketh 1. Tim. 4: In the latter times many shall depart from the faith, &c. For we see it brought to passe by the meanes of these, that true faith lyeth euery where oppressed, is not onely not preached, but also commonly disallowed and condemned, with all them that either teach or profes it. The Pope, Bishops, Colleges, Monasteries, and Vniuersities haue now aboue fiue hundred yeares persecuted it with one mind and consent, yea and that maruelous stiffely and obstinately, and haue done no other thing vnto the world, but euery where as much as they were able driuen many vnto hell. Which truely both hath bene and is that last and most hurtfull persecution of Antichrist: The Lord at the last bring it to an end.

Denyers of the faith of Christ.

If any obiect against the admiration or rather mad senselesnes of these men, that we doe nothing but that that is meete, if we count our selues euen holy, trusting to the goodnes of God iustifying vs, seeing that Dauid prayed thus: Preserue thou me, O Lord, for I am holy. And for that Paule sayth: The Spirit of God beareth witnes with our Spirit that we are the children of God: They answer that the Prophet and Apostle would not teach vs in these wordes, or giue vs an example, which we should follow, but that they being peculiarly and speciall enlightened, receiued such reuelatiō of them selues that they were holy. And after this sort they misinterpret and wrest whatsoeuer place of the Scriptures affirmeth that we are holy, saying that such doctrines are not written for vs, but that they are rather peculiar miracles and prerogatiues as they call them, which doe not belonge to all. Which forged imagination we accounte of, as hauing come from

Psal. 86. 2.
Rom. 8. 16.

their sick braine, who when as they be them selues void of faith, and sauour nothing of the spirit, thinke and contend, that there be none which haue sounde faith and the spirit, whereby surely they beleeue them selues to be thornes and thistles, not Christians, but rather enemies and destroyers of Christians, and persecutours of the Christian faith.

Againe, they are of this beleefe, that they shall be righteous & holy by their owne workes, and that because of them God will giue vnto them saluation and eternal blessednes. But here see the madnes of men: in their opinion and iudgement it is a Christian thinge, to thinke that we shall be righteous and saued because of our workes, and to beleeue that these thinges are giuen by the grace of God, they condemne as hereticall. They attribute that to their owne workes which they attribute not to the grace of God: they affirme that they doe saue vs, and not this: they trust to workes, they can not trust to Gods grace: which blindnes worthely commeth vnto them, inasmuch as they will not build vpon the rocke, let them build vpon the sand, & so be drowned by their owne meanes, that by their owne workes and satisfactions they may torment them selues euen vnto death, gratifying Satan herein, for that they will not rest vpon the grace of God, & serue the Lord with a gentle and sweete seruice. For they that are endued with true faith, and doe rest vpon the grace of the Lord, it is meruelous, how they are in God, by his goodnes, of most quiet mindes, and greatly reioycing with holy ioy: whereupon they doe also with pleasure apply them selues to good workes, not to such as these of Cains broode doe, as to fayned prayers, fasting, base & filthy apparell, & such like trifles, but to true & right good workes, whereby their neighbour is profited, and from whence no small commoditie redounded vnto men. Moreouer, they are of most ready mindes to suffer whatsoeuer thinges, inasmuch as they are certaine that God doth fauour them, and hath a care of them. These are right honest and profitable men, of whom both God is glorified, & men much profited. When as those of Cains broode serue to no vse, either before God or before men, no, they doe not so much as profit them selues, but are onely an vnprofitable lumpe of earth, yea not onely vnprofitable, but exceeding pernicious and hurtfull also both to them selues, and to others. For inasmuch as they are destitute of true faith, they can not giue vn-

The Papistes attribute more to their owne workes then to God his grace.

They that are endued with a true faith, are both ioyfull in God and dutifull toward their neighbours.

to

to God his due glory, nor doe those good workes which may truly profit their neighbour. For those workes that they apply them selues vnto, are their owne inuentions, consisting in gestures, apparell, places, times, meates and such like trifles, whereby their neighbour can be holpen neither in body, nor minde, nor in any thinge els. For what can it profit me that thy crowne is shaven very broad: that thou wearest a gray coule: what profit bringeth it, that thou fastest to day, and keepest holy day to morrow: that thou abstainest from this meate, and eatest that: that thou remainest in this place: that thou readest and mumblest vp daily so many wordes? Surely thou doost nothing els by these, but torment thy selfe to please Satan, and to be a pernicious and hurtfull example to thy neighbours: for there is no Christianitie in thy life being such. Thou beleeuest not as it behoueth a Christian to beleeue, and therefore neither doost thou pray Christianly: Thy fasting also is not true chastising of thy body, but rashly taken vpon thee in steede of a good worke: In a summe, this thy seruice and study of religion is no other thing, then in time past amonge the Iewes was the religion of Moloch and Baal, in the honour of whom they did kill and burne euen their owne children. So pernitious and pestilent an example is this thy holines, which seemeth so goodly vnto thee, which when it meruelously counterfaiteth a shew of godlines, it draweth miserable men to the following thereof, and vtterly extinguisheth true religion.

Where true faith is wanting, there neither God can be duly glorified, nor true good workes done

Here perhaps some godly man will thinke: If the matter be so, and our workes doe not saue vs, but onely to heare Christ and beleue in him, who is giuen vnto vs of the Father to be our righteousnes and saluation, to what ende then are so many precepts giuen vnto vs, and why doth God so seuerely require that they be obeyed? The present text of the Apostle shall giue vnto vs the solution of this question, and vpon this fit occasion we will now enter into the exposition thereof. The Galathians being taught of Paule the faith of Christ, but afterwards seduced by false Apostles, thought that the matter of our saluation must be finished & made perfect by the workes of the law, and that onely faith doth not suffize. These Paule calleth backe againe from workes vnto faith with great diligence, and words meruelous effectual, plainly prouing that the workes of the law which goe before faith, doe make vs onely seruaunts, and be of no importance to godlines &

saluation: but that faith doth make vs the sonnes of God, & that from thence true good workes doe without constraint forthwith most plentifully flowe. But here we must accustom our selues to the wordes of the Apostle: He calleth him a seruaunt that is occupied in workes without faith, whereof we haue already intreated at large: he calleth him a sonne, which is righteous and liueth by faith alone, without workes. The reason hereof is this: this seruaunt, although he apply him selfe to good workes, yet he doth it not with that minde, with which a sonne doth, that is with a minde that is free, willing, & certaine that the inheritance and all the good thinges of the Father are his: but doth it as he that is hyred with a stipend in an other mans house, who hopeth not that the inheritance shal come vnto him. The works in deede of the sonne and the seruaunt are like, & almost all one according to the outward appearance, but their mindes do differ exceeding much, and their hope is nothing like, euen as Christ him selfe sayth: The seruaunt abideth not in the house for euer: but the sonne abideth for euer. Joh. 8. These of Cains broode want the faith of sonnes, which they them selues confesse. for they thinke it a most absurd thing, & wicked arrogancie, to affirme them selues to be the sonnes of God and holy, therefore as they beleeue, euen so are they counted before God, they neuer become the sonnes of God, or holy, neuertheles they are exercised with the workes of the law, and are well wearied, wherefore they are and remaine seruaunts for euer. And they receiue no other reward, but these temporall things, namely, quietnes of life, aboundance of goods, dignitie and honours, &c. Which we see to be vsuall among the followers of Popish religion, then whom there is none at this day that liueth more pleasauntly, more welthily, more gloriously and honorably. But this is their reward, they are seruaunts and not sonnes, wherefore in death they shall be thrust from all good thinges, neither shall any portion of eternall inheritance come vnto them, who in this present life would beleeue nothing thereof. So therefore it is that seruaunts and sonnes are not much vnlike in workes, but in minde and faith they are most vnlike.

Whom Paul calleth a seruaunt, and whom a sonne in the text which is here intreated of.

Now the Apostle endeuoureth here to proue, (which in deede is the very matter) that the law with all the workes thereof doth make vs no other then seruaunts, if this faith in Christ, whereof we haue spokē, be away. For that alone doth make vs the sonnes

of

of God. Neither the law nor nature can giue it, onely the Gospel bringeth it, when it is heard with an holy silence of minde. It is the word of grace, which the holy Ghost doth forthwith followe, as it is shewed in very many places, and specially Act. 10: where we read, that the holy Ghost did by and by fall on Cornelius and his familie hearing the preaching of Peter. Moreouer the lawe was giuen for this, that we might learne by it, howe vyde we are of grace, and howe farre from being of the minde of sonnes, yea that we are plainly of a seruile minde. For we being left to our selues, can in no wise be free from the lawe, neither if we doe any good thing, doe we it willingly, forasmuch as that faith of sonnes is wanting, wherwith he that is endued, knoweth assuredly, that the eternall inheritance shall come vnto him, and is of his owne accord inclined and bent, with a willing and ready spirit to doe those thinges that are good. Nowe these men doe willingly confesse that they are void of this faith, and if they would confesse the truth in deede, they shoulde also plainly confesse, that they had farre rather be without all lawe, and that they are against their wills subiect thereunto. Wherefore all thinges are among them constrained, and void of faith, and they are in very deede compelled to confesse that by the lawe they can not attaine any further. Which one thing they ought to learne by the law, and know, that they are seruaunts, and haue nothing belonging to sonnes, wherby they might be enflamed with desire to come from seruitude to the state and condition of sonnes: and might make no account of their owne thinges, as in deede they ought to doe, that God of his grace might aduaunce them vnto an other state by faith. Nowe this were a sound vnderstanding of the law, and the true vse therof, whereof this is the office, to reproue and conuince men herof, that they are seruaunts and not sonnes, as many as follow the law without faith, and that they doe exercise themselues therein plainly against their wills, and with no confidence of grace. For it causeth and maketh such to be offended at it, and learne by it, how vnprepared and vnwilling they are to that which is good, inasmuch as they are void of faith, whereby it moueth them to seeke helpe some other where, and not to presume of their owne strength to satisfie it. For it requireth a ready will and hartes of sonnes, which alone can satisfie it: it vtterly refuseth seruaunts, and them that be vnwilling.

The lawe why it was giuen.

The office of the lawe.

But these of Cains broode doe not onely of their owne accord confesse, that they want this faith, which maketh the sonnes of God, but also they persecute it: they feele and know also ful wel, how vnwillingly they beare the lawe, and had rather to be free from it, neuertheles they thinke that they shal become righteous by these their vnwilling and constrained workes. They will continue seruaunts, it will not be chaunged into sonnes, and yet they would enioy the goods of a straunge father. They do all thinges cleane out of order: whereas by the law they ought to learne, that they are seruaunts, and vnwilling to doe that which is good, and therefore should by faith aspire to the state of sonnes, notwithstanding they goe so farre that they seeke to satisfie and fulfill it by their owne workes onely. And thereby they doe altogither hinder the ende of the law, and striue against faith and grace, whereunto if they were not blind, the law would direct and driue them: And so they continue alwayes, a blinde, blockish, and miserable people. These thinges Paule teacheth Rom. 3. and 7. and doth freely pronounce that no man is iustified before God by ỹ workes of the lawe, adding no other cause hereof, then this, for that the knowledge of sinne only commeth by the law. If thou wilt know howe this commeth to passe, consider well some one of Cains broode, and thou shalt byandby see it verified. First he worketh his workes according to the lawe, with great griefe and labour, and yet he therewith confesseth, that he is vncertaine whether he be the sonne of God, and holy. Yea he condemneth and curseth this faith, as the most pernitious arrogancie and errour of all other, and will continue in his douting, vntil he be made certaine by his workes. Here thou seest plainly that such a man is not good or righteous, seeing that he wanteth this faith and beleefe, that he is counted acceptable before God, and his sonne, yea he is an enemie of this faith, and therefore of righteousnes also: Wherefore neither can his workes be counted good, although they pretend a faire shew of fulfilling the lawe. And thus is it easie to vnderstand that which Paule sayth: that no man is iustified before God by the workes of the lawe. For the worker must be iustified before God, before he worketh any good thing, although before men, which esteeme a man by outward thinges, and not by the mind, they are counted righteous which apply them selues to the doing of good workes. For men iudge the worker by the workes,

No man is iustified by the lawe.

God

God iudgeth the workes by the worker. Nowe the first precept requireth, that we acknowledge & worship one God, that is, that we trust and rest in him alone, which in deede is the true faith, whereby we become the sonnes of God. But how easie is it by this precept to know, that sinne is both in him of Cains brood, & in thy selfe, inasmuch as both of you want such a faith, euen by your owne nature? which thou couldest not know but by meanes of this law. And this is that which Paul meaneth when he sayth: That by the law commeth the knowledge of sinne. Now thou Rom. 3.20.
canst be deliuered from this euill of infidelitie, neither by thyne owne power, nor by the power of the lawe, wherefore all thy workes whereby thou goest about to satisfie the lawe, can be nothing but workes of the lawe, of farre lesse importance, then that they are able to iustifie thee before God: who counteth them only righteous, which truly beleeue in him, for they onely acknowledge him the true God, are his sonnes, and doe truely fulfill the law. But if thou shouldest euen kill thy selfe with workes, yet is it so farre of, that thy hart can obtaine this faith thereby, that thy workes are euen a hinderance that thou canst not knowe it, yea they are a cause that thou doost persecute it.

Hereupon it is, that he that studieth to fulfill the law without faith, is afflicted for the deuils sake, and not for Gods sake, and continueth a persecutour both of faith and of the lawe, vntill he come to him selfe, and doth plainly ceasse to trust in him selfe and in his owne workes, doth giue this glory vnto God, who iustifieth the vngodly, acknowledgeth him selfe to be nothing, and sigheth for God his grace, whereof he doth now know, being taught by the law, that he hath neede. Then faith and grace come, and fil him being emptie, satisfie him being hungry, by and by follow good workes, which are truely good: Neither are they now the workes of the law, but of the spirit, of faith and grace, and they are called in the Scriptures the workes of God, which he worketh in vs. For whatsoeuer we do of our owne power & strength, and is not wrought in vs by his grace, without dout it is a worke of the law, and auaileth nothing to iustification, but is both euill and hated of God, because of the infidelitie wherein it is done. Againe, whatsoeuer he of Cains brood worketh, he doth nothing from his hart, nothing freely and with a willing mind, except he be as it were hyred with some reward, or be commaunded to doe

All that we doe of our selues being not assisted by the grace of God, is euill.

some such thinge, whereunto he ought otherwise to be ready of him selfe: Euen as an euill and vnthriftie seruaunt suffereth him selfe to be brought to no worke, vnles he be hyred with a reward, or commaunded, whereunto he ought otherwise to be willing of him selfe. Nowe how vnpleasaunt is it to a man to haue such seruaunts? But they of Cains brood be plainly such, they would do no good worke at all, if they were not either compelled by ỹ feare of hell, or allured by the hope of present good thinges. Whereby againe thou seest, that these haue no mind to ỹ law, they gape only for gaine, or are moued with feare, whereby they bewray them selues, that they doe rather hate the law from their hart, and had leuer that there were no law at all: Wherefore it is plainly manifest, that they are not good, and consequently that neither their workes be good: for how should euill men worke good workes? Moreouer those their workes, which in apparance & shew seeme to be good, are either wrested from them by feare, or are bought with promises. An euill hart can doe nothing that is good. But this naughtines of the hart & vnwillingnes to doe good, the lawe bewrayeth when it teacheth, that God doth not greatly esteeme, what the hand doth, but what the hart doth: which, seeing it hateth the law that is good, who wil deny it to be most euill? Surely it is a sinne to be against the lawe, which is very good. Thus therefore sinne is knowne by the lawe, according as Paule teacheth, forasmuch as we learne thereby, howe our affection is not set on that which is good, which ought to terrifie vs, and driue vs to ceasse to trust in our selues, and to long after the grace of God, whereby this naughtines of the hart may be taken away, and our mind may become such, as is of it selfe ready to good things, and loueth the lawe, which voluntarily, not for any feare of punishment, or respect of reward, but because it doth of it owne accord like well of the law, and loue righteousnes, worketh those things which are truely good: By this meanes onely one is made of a seruaunt a sonne, of a slaue an heire. Which mind and spirit thou shalt receiue by no other meanes, then by faith in Christ, as it is before spoken at large. Nowe let vs come to entreat of the text of Paule.

What the knowledge of sinne which commeth by the law, ought to worke in vs.

Verse 1. The heire as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a seruant, though he be Lord of all.

The

He propoundeth a similitude taken of the custom of men. For we see that the children, vnto whom their parents haue left some substance, be brought vp no otherwise then if they were seruants. They are fedde and clothed with their goods, but they are not permitted to doe with them, nor to vse them according to their owne minde, but are ruled with feare & discipline of maners, that so euen in their owne inheritance they liue no otherwise then as seruaunts. After the same sort is it also in spirituall things. God made vnto the elect a couenant, when he promised that it shoulde come to passe that in the seede of Abraham, that is in Christ, all nations shoulde be blessed, Gen. 22. That couenant was afterward confirmed by the death of Christ, and reuealed and published abroad by the preaching of the Gospell. For the Gospell is no other thinge, then an open and generall preaching of this grace, that in Christ blessing and grace is layde vp for all men, which so many onely shall receiue as shall beleeue. Nowe before that this couenant is truly opened and made manifest to men, the sonnes of God liue after the maner of seruaunts vnder the lawe, and are exercised with the workes of the law, although they can not be iustified by them, inasmuch as they are seruile, and doe nothinge auaile to iustification as it is sayde before: Notwithstanding, because they are euen then predestinate to life, when they are after the maner of seruaunts helde vnder the lawe, they are true heires of heauenly good thinges, that is, of this blessing and grace of this couenant: albeit they as yet doe not know, or enioy it, but are wearied with workes no otherwise then other that are voyde of fayth. So at this daye thou mayest finde not a fewe, which nowe hauing faith, as they are the sonnes of God, so doe they also enioye the grace of God in the libertie of the sonnes, when as a litle before being drowned in workes, they knewe nothinge at all of faith, being in all thinges like vnto other hypocrites. Neuertheles, because they were before the foundation of the worlde appointed of God vnto this fayth and state of sonnes, they were euen then the sonnes of God before, when they were as yet altogither ignorant of faith. There are some also which being as yet as it were drowned in workes, are like to seruaunts and those of Cains brood, who notwithstanding before God are sonnes and heires, which shall be brought vnto the faith of sonnes, leauing the state of seruaunts, and shall em-

The similitude of Paul applyed.

What the Gospell is.

brace the libertie and right of sonnes, shall ceasse from the workes of the law, and come vnto the inheritance of iustification, that being iustified by grace, they may worke freely those things that be good, to the glory of God, and commoditie of their neighbours, being farre from all feare, or hope, as well of iustification, as of all other good things. For they shall then haue and possesse it by the couenant of the Father confirmed by Christ, & reuealed, published, and as it were deliuered into their handes by the Gospell, through the onely grace and mercy of the Father.

The faithful before Christes cõming had the same couenant which we haue.

This couenant both Abraham and all the fathers, which were endued with true faith, had no otherwise then we haue, although before Christ was glorified, this grace was not openly published and preached. They liued in like faith, and therefore they obtayned also like good things. They had the same grace, blessing and couenant with vs, for there is one Father, and the same God of all. Thou seest therefore that Paul, as almost in all other places, so here also doth entreat much of faith, that we are not iustified by our workes, but by faith alone, whereby not certaine good things by peecemeale, but all good thinges at once doe come vnto vs. For there is no good thing, which this couenant of God doth not contayne in it, it giueth and bringeth righteousnes, saluation, and God himselfe. Workes can not be done at once, but by faith the whole inheritance of God is togither receiued. From thence also good workes doe come, howbeit not meritorious, whereby thou mayst seeke saluation, but which with a minde already possessing righteousnes, thou must doe with great pleasure to the profit of thy neighbours. For thou shalt nowe haue neede of nothing, being endued with faith, which bringeth all thinges, yea surely moe thinges then one dare wish, much lesse can deserue: wherefore it is no meruell if such worke all thinges freely, and so do vnto their neighbour, as they both beleeue and reioyce, that God of his goodnes & by ỹ merit of Christ hath done vnto them. What rewarde shoulde they hope for, which already haue all things? the shadow whereof those most miserable ones of Cains brood seeke by their workes, but they shall neuer find it, they follow it, but they shall neuer come vnto it.

Verse 2. But is vnder Tuters and Gouerners, vntill the time appoynted of the father.

Tuters

Tuters and Gouerners are they which doe bringe vppe the heire, and so rule him, and order his goods, that neither he wast his inheritance by riotous liuing, nepther his goods otherwise perish or be consumed. They permit him not to vse his goods at his owne will or pleasure, but suffer him to enioye them as they shall be needefull and profitable vnto him. First, whereas they keepe him at home, and informe him with good maners, what doe they else but prepare and instruct him, whereby he may moste commodiously and longe enioye his inheritance? Agayne, the more straitely and severely they bringe him vppe, so muche greater desire they stirre vppe and enflame in him to come to, and enioye his inheritance. For as soone as he beginneth to be of any discretion and iudgement, it can not be but grieuous vnto him, to liue at the commaundement and will of an other. After the same sorte standeth the case of the elect, which are brought vppe and instructed vnder the lawe, as vnder a Maister, to the libertie of the sonnes. First the lawe profiteth them in this, that by the feare of it, and of the punishment which it threatneth, they are driuen from sinne, at the least from the outwarde worke, least that the libertie of sinning encrease ouermuche, and remoue them from all religion of God, that hope of saluation being paste, and God quite contemned, they shoulde runne headlonge without all feare into all kindes of euill, as some desperate persons are wont to doe. Agayne, the lawe is profitable to them in this, that by it they are brought vnto knowledge of them selues, and learne howe vnwillingly they liue vnder the lawe, and that they doe no good at all with a willing and readie mynde as it becommeth sonnes, but with a seruile and vnwilling minde: whereby they maye easily see, what is the roote of this euill, and what is especially needefull vnto saluation, to wit a newe and a willing spirit to that which is good. Which surely nepther the lawe, nor the workes of the lawe are able to giue, yea the lenger and the more that they applye them selues vnto them, so much more vnwilling shall they finde them selues, and with so muche more griefe to worke those thinges that are good. Hereupon nowe they learne, that they doe not satisfie the lawe, although outwardly they liue according to the prescript rule thereof: for as they doe pretend to obeye it in worke, so in minde they doe hate it, wherefore in

The elect are for a time vnder the law as vnder a Tuter or Gouerner.

minde also they remayne sinners, although they pretende them selues righteous by workes, that is, they are like vnto those of Cains broode, and to hypocrites, whose hande in deede is compelled to good, but they haue a hart, which as it is an enemie to the lawe, so doth it verely consent vnto sinnes, and is miserably subiect vnto them. To knowe this concerning them selues is not the lowest degree to saluation.

The workes of the lawe.

Hereof also we may see, howe fitly Paule calleth such constrayned workes the workes of the lawe. For they flowe not from a ready and willing hart, but are enforced by the lawe, the harte declyning an other waye. Howebeit the lawe bothe not require workes alone, but muche rather the harte it selfe, so that we might saye, not onely the workes, but rather the harte of the lawe: not onely the handes of the lawe, but rather the mynde, will, and all the strength of the lawe. Whereupon it is sayde in the first Psalme of the blessed man: But his delight is in the lawe of God, and in his lawe doth he exercise him selfe daye and night. Suche a mynde the lawe requireth in deede, but it giueth it not, neyther can it giue it of it owne nature, whereby it commeth to passe that whyle the lawe continueth to exact it of a man, and to condemne him as longe as he hath not suche a minde, as disobedient to God, he is in anguish on euery side, his conscience is grieuously terrified and without all counsell and helpe. Then in deede he is moste readye for grace, and this is that tyme appoynted of the Father, when his seruitude should ende, and he should enter into the state of the sonnes.

The time appoynted of the Father.

For being thus in distresse and terrified, seeing that by no other meanes he can auoyde the condemnation of the lawe, he turneth him selfe wholly to praye to the Father for grace, he acknowledgeth his frayltie, he confesseth his sinne, he ceasseth to trust in workes, and doth altogither, as it is meete, humble him selfe, perceiuing nowe full well, that betweene him and a manifest sinner there is no difference at all but of workes, that he hath a wicked harte, euen as euery other sinner hath. Yea it may be that such hypocrites doe farre more hate the lawe in their harte, then those famous sinners, which are euen as it were drowned in sinnes. For whyle these are euen wearyed with the workes of sinnes, and doe trye the filthines of them, it often tymes commeth to passe, that they doe in some

part

part loath and detest them, when as those righteous ones doe alwaies thinke those thinges that they haue not tried, to be more sweete, neither can they beleeue ỳ there is so much gall in sinnes, whereof they are by nature inflamed with such a desire, & therefore as they doe more earnestly loue sinne, so consequently they doe much worse hate the law, which as a certaine scholemaister, is alwayes against their desire.

Moreouer forasmuch as the condition of mans nature is such, that it is able to giue to the lawe workes onely, and not the hart, who doth not see howe greatly it is contemned of vs? An vnequall diuision truely, to dedicate the hart, which doth incomparably excell all other thinges, to sinne, and the brutish hande to the lawe: which is nothing els, but to offer chaffe to the lawe, and the wheat to sinne: the shell to God, and the kernell to Satan. So that commeth to passe which is in the Gospell, that the wickednesses of him, which is in thy iudgemēt a desperat sinner, are counted as a mote, and thine, which so playest the hypocrite are counted as a beame. If this euill be added hereunto, that such hypocrites doe not see a beame in their eye, but being blinded doe perseuer in their accustomed workes, not marking this their inward abhomination of the hart, they byandby burst forth to iudge & condemne others, they despise sinners, as he did in the Gospell, they thinke them selues not like vnto them, they are not as other men are, they thinke them selues alone godly and righteous. Whose vngodlines if one reproue, & as it is meete, bewray, they byandby are in a rage and furie, and sticke not to kill innocent Abel, and to persecute all those that follow the truth. And they will seeme to doe that to defend good works, and to obtaine righteousnes, neither doe they promise to them selues a small reward for this, inasmuch as they doe, as they say, persecute heretikes, blasphemers, them which be seduced & doe seduce with mischieuous errour, which labour to seduce and plucke euen them from good works. Here thou maist see that that sheweth it selfe, whatsoeuer the Scriptures attribute to these men being surely most pestilent spirits, to wit, that they are a generation of vipers, and serpents. They are no other but of Cains broode, and so they doe continue, seruaunts they are, and seruaunts they doe remaine.

Hypocritical dealing.

But they whom God hath chosen Abels and sonnes, do learne by the lawe, howe vnwilling a hart they haue vnto the lawe, they

What the law worketh in the elect.

fall from their arrogancie, and are by this knowleoge of them selues which the lawe bringeth, brought euen vnto nothing in their owne eyes. Then byandby commeth the Gospel, and lifteth them vp being humbled, whereby the Lord giueth his grace vnto them thus casting downe them selues, and endueth them with faith. Hereby they receiue that couenant of the eternall blessing, and the holy Ghost, which renueth their hart, that nowe it is delighted with the lawe, hateth sinne, and is willing and ready to doe those thinges that are good: And here nowe thou maist see not the workes, but the hart of the law. And this is the very time appointed to the heire of the Father, when he must be no lenger a seruaunt but a sonne, and doth now begin to be led by a free spirit, being no more kept in subiection vnder Tuters and Gouerners, after the maner of a seruaunt. Which is euen that that Paul teacheth in the wordes following.

Verse 3. Euen so, we when we were children, were in bondage vnder the rudiments of the world.

What is to be vnderstood by this word, rudiments.

By the worde rudiments thou mayst vnderstand here the first principles or lawe written, which are as it were the first exercises and instructions of holy erudition, whereof it is spoken also Heb. 5: As concerning the time ye ought to be teachers, yet haue ye neede againe that we teach you what are the first principles or rudiments of the word of God. And Colos. 2: Beware least there be any that spoyle you through philosophie and vaine deceit, through the traditions of men, according to the rudiments of the world. Again Gal. 4: How turne ye againe vnto impotent & beggerly rudiments, whereunto as from the beginning ye wil be in bondage againe? ye obserue dayes & moneths, &c. Here as it were in contempt he calleth the lawe rudiments, he addeth also, impotent, & beggerly, both because it is not able to perform that righteousnes which it requireth, and also for that it maketh men in deede poore & impotent. For whereas it earnestly requireth a hart and mind giuen to godlines, and nature is not able to satisfie it herein, it plainly maketh man to feele his pouertie, and to acknowledge his infirmitie, that that is by right required of him, which he not only hath not, but also is not able to haue. Hereunto pertaineth that which Paul hath left written 2. Cor. 3: The letter killeth, but the spirit giueth life.

The law called beggerly rudiments, and why.

Moreouer

Moreouer Paule calleth them the rudiments of the worlde, for that all that obseruing of the lawe, which men not yet renued by the spirit doe performe, doth consist in worldly thinges, to wit, in places, times, apparell, persons, vessells, and such like. But faith resteth in no worldly thinge, but in the onely grace, worde, and mercy of God, neither doth it make a man righteous and safe by any outward thing, but onely by the inuisible and eternall grace of God: Wherefore it counteth a like, dayes, meates, persons, apparell, and all thinges of this worlde. For none of these by it selfe doth eyther further or hinder godlines & saluation, as it doth the righteousnes of those of Cains brood, which is as it were typed to these outward thinges. Faith therefore deserueth nothing lesse then to be called the rudiments of the worlde, by which we obtayne the fulnes of heauenly good thinges: and albeit it be occupied also in outward thinges, yet is it addicted to no outward thinge, but doth freely in all thinges that which it seeth may be done to the glorie of God, and profit of our neighbours, alwayes continuing free and the same, and yet is made all thinges to all men, that so the conuersation thereof may want all peculiar respecte and difference. With those of Cains brood it agreeth neyther in name, nor in any thinge: one of them eateth flesh, an other abstayneth from it: one weareth blacke apparell, an other white: one keepeth this day holy, an other that: euery one hath his rudiments, vnder which he is in bondage: all of them are addicted to the thinges of the worlde, which are fraple and perish in an houre. Wherefore they are no other but seruaunts of the rudiments of the worlde, which they call holy orders, godly ordinaunces, and wayes to goe to heauen. Against these Paule speaketh Colos. 2: VVherefore if ye be deade with Christ from the rudiments of the worlde, why as though ye liued in the worlde, are ye burdened with traditions? As, Touch not, Tast not, Handle not: which all perish with the vsing, and are after the commaundements and doctrines of men. VVhich thinges haue in deede a shewe of godlines, when as they are meere superstition, whereby the mind is in vayne pressed downe to these outward thinges, &c. By this and other places aboue mentioned it is playne, that all Monasteries and Colleges, whereby we measure the state of spirituall men as we call them, doe plainly disagree with the Gospel

The rudiments of the world why so called.

and Christian libertie, and that therefore it is much more daungerous to liue in these kindes of life, then among most prophane men. For all their things are nothing but rudiments & ordinaunces of the world, consisting in the difference and vse of apparell, places, times, and other present thinges, whereunto seeing they are so addicted, that they hope by them to attaine righteousnes & saluation, faith is made no account of amongest them, neither are they Christians, but in name, wherefore all their life and holines is meere sinne, and most detestable hypocrisie.

They that are vnder the rudimēts of the world, ought most diligently to looke to them selues.

It is needeful therefore, that they that are occupied in such ordinaunces, should aboue all other men most diligently looke vnto them selues, that they trust not to these ordinaunces, that they be not too much addicted vnto them, but that they doe perseuer in a free faith, which is tyed to none of those outward thinges, but resteth in the onely grace of God. For the fayre shewe of life & fayned holines, which is in those ordinaunces, doth with a meruelous and secret force withdraw from faith, more then those manifest and grosse sinnes, wherof open sinners are guilty, and doth easily make men such as Paule here speaketh of: VVhen we were children, we were in bondage vnder the rudimēts of the world, that is, when we were as yet ignorant of faith, and were exercised onely with the workes of the law, we did those outward works of the law, cōsisting in worldly things, but with an vnwilling mind, and with no faith, hoping that by these rudiments of the worlde we should obtaine saluation, wherfore we were no other then seruaunts. Nowe this false and seruile opinion faith alone taketh away, and teacheth vs to trust vnto, and rest vpon the onely grace of God, whereby at once is giuen freely that which is needefull to worke all thinges. For these workes of the lawe, if that false opinion were away, were not ill of them selues.

Verse 4. But when the fulnes of time was come, God sent forth his Sonne made of a woman, and made vnder the law.

Verse 5. That he might redeeme them which were vnder the law, that we might receiue the adoption of the sonnes.

After Paule hath taught, that righteousnes and faith can not

come to vs by the Law, neither that we can deserue it by nature, he sheweth him by whom we obtaine true righteousnes & faith, and which is the author of our iustification. Now this could not come vnto vs without any price, for it cost a verie great price, euen the sonne of God: The Apostle therefore sayth: When the fulnes of time was come, that is, when the time was ended, that time, I say, wherein it behoued vs to liue children and seruaunts vnder the discipline of the Lawe. Wherefore the Maister of sentences hath erred here, who interpreted the fulnes of time, the time of grace, which began at the birth of Christ, plaine contrarie to the Apostle, who whereas he hath written, the fulnes of time, this man hath interpreted it, the time of fulnes. For Paul speaketh of the time, which was appointed of the father to the sonne, wherein he should liue vnder tuters. Now as this time was full come to the Iewes and ended, when Christ came in the flesh, so is it daily fulfilled to others, when they come vnto the knowledge of Christ, and do chaunge the seruitude of the Lawe with the faith of the sonnes. And this in deede is that comming, whereby alone we obtaine the libertie of sonnes, without which that corporall comming would auaile nothing. For Christ euen for this cause hath come vnto vs, that beleeuing in him, we may be restored to true libertie, by which faith they of the auncient time also obtained the libertie of the spirit. And so, whereas he should come to the holy men of olde time, he came euen then, forasmuch as by faith they felt him to be their true Sauiour and deliuerer, howbeit he is not yet come to our Iewes, although he is gone awaye againe in body long since: for they do not beleeue in him. All from the beginning of the worlde to the end must trust vnto the comming of Christ, whereby alone seruitude is chaunged with libertie, but yet by fayth, either in Christ being to come, as it was before he was borne: or in him being come, as it is now. Wherefore as soone as thou beginnest to beleeue in Christ, he commeth vnto thee a deliuerer and Sauiour, & now the time of bondage is ended, that is, as the Apostle speaketh, the fulnes thereof is come.

The fulnes of time how it is to be vnderstood.

This place surely is verie copious, and containeth in it diuers thinges most worthie to be knowne, so that I greatly feare, that it shall not be handled of vs according to the worthines thereof. For it teacheth that it is not sufficient to beleeue that Christ is

come, but that we must also beleeue that he was sent of God, is the sonne of God, and also verie man, borne of a Virgine, who alone hath fulfilled the Lawe, and that not for himselfe, but for vs, that is, for our saluations sake. Let vs wey and consider these thinges in order. First it is sufficiently taught in the Gospell of Iohn, that Christ is the sonne of God, and was sent of God, which he that beleeueth not is in a most miserable case, as Christ himselfe pronounceth Ioh. 8: Except ye beleeue that I am he, ye shall dye in your synnes. And Ioh. 1: In it was life, and that life was the light of men. For this cause the mynde of man neither may nor ought to enioy any other thing then that soueraigne good, so, that it should be satisfied with any other then with it, whereof it was made, and which is the fountaine of all good thinges: wherefore it is not the will of God that we should beleeue or repose our trust in any other thing, neither doth this honour belong to any other. And therefore God himselfe ioyned himselfe to man, being made man, that he might more forcibly allure men into him, and stirre them vp to beleeue in him. No good could come vnto God hereby, but it was necessarie for vs that he should be made man, lest that we should beleeue in any other thing thē in God alone. For if we should beleeue in Christ, and not in God, as God should be depriued of his honour, so should we be depriued of life and saluation. For we must beleeue in one God, who is the verie truth, and we without him can neither liue, nor obtaine saluation. Whereas therefore the Apostle sayth; God sent forth his Sonne, it is thereby manifest, that he was, before he came and was made man. Now if he be a sonne, he is more then a man or an Angell, which seeing they are the highest creatures, surely he is also true God. For to be the sonne of God is more then to be an Angell, as it is els where declared. Againe, seeing that he is sent of God, and is his sonne, he must needes be an other person. And so the Apostle teacheth here, that the Father and the Sonne are one God, and two persons. Of the holy Ghost it shalbe spoken hereafter.

Why it was requisite that God should be made mā.

Christ a distinct person from the Father.

The second thing which ought here to be considered, is, that Christ is verie man and the sonne of man. This Paul teacheth, when he sayth: made of a woman. For surely that that is made or borne of a woman, is man: A woman by nature bringeth forth nothing but verie man. This it is necessarie that we beleeue as

Christ verie man.

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the Lord himselfe declareth Joh. 6, in these wordes: Except ye eate the flesh of the sonne of man, and drinke his blood, ye haue no life in you. But to eate and drinke his flesh and blood, is nothing els but to beleeue, that Christ tooke these vpō him in deed, and did also yeeld them to death for our sake. This is that couenaunt which was promised to Abraham: In thy seede shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Gen. 22. Christ is this seede, and therefore the true sonne of Abraham, his flesh and blood. Hereupon it appeareth that they preuaile nothing, which make a proper waye vnto themselues to God, by their owne workes and godlines, and neglecting Christ striue to come directly vnto God, as the Turkes and Iewes doe. This Christ alone is the mediatour & blessed seede, by whom thou must receiue blessing, otherwise thou shalt continue for euer in malediction. This couenāt of God shal not be violated of because any. Thus Christ himselfe sayth, Joh. 6: No man commeth to the Father, but by me. The nature of God is otherwise higher, then that we are able to attaine vnto it, wherefore he hath humbled himselfe to vs, and taken vpon him that nature, which is best knowne and most familiar vnto vs, to wit, euen our owne. Here he looketh for vs: here he will receiue vs: he that will seeke him here, shall finde: he that will aske here shall be heard: here is the throne of grace and the true mercy seate, from which none is driuen or thrust which w̄ true faith resorteth vnto it. They which do here neglect him, as though he were made man for nought, and in the meane season do without a mediatour praie vnto God, who hath created heauen and earth, they shall pray in deede, but none shall helpe them: they shall crie, but none shall heare them.

What it is to eat & drinke the flesh and blood of Christ.

We must come vnto God by Christ.

The third thing which is here set forth vnto vs to beleeue, is, that Marie the mother of Iesus is a virgine. This Paule affirmeth when he sayth, that he was made of a woman, not of a man, as other are wont. This is that one man, which was borne onely of a woman. He would not say, of a virgine, for that a virgine is not a name of nature, but a woman signifieth a sex and certein condition, whereunto it belongeth to be with childe, and to bring forth, that is, to do the partes of a mother. Seeing therefore that Marie was a mother in deede, she is rightly called a woman. For she brought forth fruite vnto vs, which belongeth to a mother, and not to a virgin, although she brought it forth alone,

The mother of Iesus a Virgine.

Why Paule rather saide that Christ was made of a woman, thē of a virgine.

without the meanes of man, wherein she was declared both a singular virgin and woman. But because it is of greater importaunce to the Apostle, and vnto all vs, that Marie is a woman, and thereby the mother of Christ, then that she is a virgine, for that this is onely an ornament vnto her, but in that she was a woman she brought forth him which is saluation vnto all, for this cause I say, the Apostle calleth her rather a woman then a virgine. Neither was it considered in choosing her, that she was a virgine, but that she was a woman: for that she being a virgine became a mother, the cause was, for that it behoued that Christ should be borne without synne, and therefore without the commixtion of man. For of the seede of a sinfull man, nothing could be borne, but that which is defiled with synne: but it behoued that Christ should be that blessed seede, whose blessing should be poured forth vpon all, as the maner of the diuine couenant required. Whereupon it is gathered, that Christ could not be borne of the seede of man, for that all men are by nature vnder the curse. For how should blessing be promised to come vnto all by Christ, if all were not subiect to the curse?

Why it behoued that ỹ mother of Christ should be a virgine.

Forasmuch then as the couenant of God promised to Abraham, did require these two thinges, both that Christ should be the true sonne of Abraham, that is, his seede, his true flesh and blood, & that also he should be borne pure from synne: this meane was inuented, that he should of Marie being verie woman and the daughter of Abraham, be borne verie man, and the right ofspring of Abraham: and also that he should be borne without the commixtion of man, a virgine being conceiued with child by the onely meanes of the holy Ghost, that being full of blessing, he might derive the same vnto all beleeuers. So was the couenant of God fulfilled on either side: and it came to passe, that Christ became both the true seede of Abraham, and yet free from all contagion of Adam, and is also the author of eternall blessing to thē that beleeue. Wherefore although Marie be holily to be reuerenced by the name of virgine, yet by no comparison greater reuerence is due vnto her then by the name of woman, for that her most holy members, inasmuch as she was a woman, were aduaūced vnto this dignitie, that they were as meanes toward the fulfilling of the holy couenant of God, and by them he was brought forth, which was to put away all curse from them that beleeue

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in him, that so he might be both the blessed seede of Abraham, and the blessed frute of the wombe of Marie. Unto which benefite the onely virginitie had not bin sufficient, yea it had bin euen vnprofitable.

The fourth thing whereof the present place of the Apostle doth admonish vs, is, that Christ hath satisfied the Lawe for vs. Which he also witnesseth of himselfe Matth. 5: I am not come to destroye the Lawe, but to fulfill it. This also the reason of the couenant requireth: for if by this seede of Abraham all men must be deliuered from the curse, it is necessarie that by it the Lawe be fulfilled. For as men are by nature the children of wrath, and subiect to the curse, so it must needes be accursed, whatsoeuer they doe, for it is before proued at large, that he which is euell himselfe, can worke nothing that is good: likewise that we can do nothing that God will approue, vnles we our selues be approued of him before: and seeing that the Lawe requireth the heart, which can not be performed of them, which are not as yet regenerate by the spirit, it must needes be, that all the sonnes of Adam are giltie of transgressing the Lawe, and vnles, whereas they themselues are not able, an other, to wit Christ, should performe that which the Lawe requireth, and so satisfie the Law for them, they should altogither perish by the curse of the Law. But when as Christ, going about to shewe, that the heart is required of the Lawe, did condemne the workes which proceeded not from a heart that is godly and consenting vnto the Lawe, he was accused of the Pharisees that he was come to destroie the Lawe. Because therefore he would take awaye this false opinion of himselfe, he sayd: Thinke not that I am come to destroy the Lawe, for I am not come to destroie, but to fulfill the Lawe: yea and I will giue a spirit vnto them that be mine, which shal iustifie their heart by faith, and incline it vnto true good workes. The same is vsuall with Paul also, who, Rom. 3, when he had reiected the workes of the Lawe, and extolled faith, aunswering such an obiection, saith: Do we then make the Lawe of none effect? God forbid: yea we establish the Lawe. For we teach that the true fulfilling of the Lawe is by Christ. The like also is wont to be obiected to vs, as though we did forbid good workes, when we disallow monasteries with their workes, & teach that they must first by faith become good and approued of God, whereby they

It was needful that christ should fulfill the Lawe for vs.

may afterward do true good workes, by which both their flesh may be chastised, and their neighbours edified.

Here we must note moreouer, that the Lawe can be fulfilled of no man, but of him which being free from the Lawe, is no more vnder it. We must accustome our selues also to the maner of Paules speeche, that we may know assuredly who is vnder the Lawe, and who is not vnder the Lawe. As many therefore as worke good workes, because the Lawe hath so commaunded, being brought thereunto either with feare of punishmēt, or hope of reward, are vnder the Lawe, and are compelled to do good thinges and to be honest, being not brought hereunto of their owne voluntarie will. Wherefore the Lawe hath dominion ouer them, whose seruaunts and captiues they are. Now such are all men, that are not yet regenerate by Christ, which euerie one may easily learne with himselfe by experience, euerie mans own conscience shewing it vnto him. We all finde our selues so affected, that if no Lawe did vrge vs, & both the feare of punishment, and hope of reward were awaye, and it were plainly free for vs to do what we list, we would do altogether those thinges that are euell, and omit the thinges that are good, especially either tentation mouing vs, or occasion prouoking vs. But now, forasmuch as the Law stayeth vs with the threatninges and promises thereof, we do oftentimes abstaine from euell thinges, and do those thinges that be good, howbeit we do them not for the loue of goodnes, and hatred of euel, but onely for feare of punishment, and respect of reward: wherefore being left wholy to our selues, we are seruaunts of the Lawe, neither do we heare it any otherwise, then seruaunts do their hard and cruell maister.

Who be vnder the Law.

But they that are not vnder the Lawe, that is, are not so against their wills in subiection vnder the dominion thereof, they of their owne accord do good workes, and abstaine from euell, being neither terrified with ỳ threatninges of the Law, nor allured with the promises thereof, but euen for that they do of their voluntarie will beare a loue to honestie, and hate that which is dishonest, and are also from their heart delighted with the Lawe of God, so that if there were no Lawe made, notwithstanding they would desire to liue no otherwise then the Lawe commaundeth: as, to shun those thinges that be euell, and applie themselues to honest studies and exercises. They that are such, are

They which are not vnder the Lawe described, of what sort they be.

sonnes,

sonnes, whom not nature, but that onely blessed seede of Abraham, that is, Christ, could make such, renuing by his grace and spirit the heartes of them that beleeue in him. Wherefore not to be vnder the Lawe, is not, to be free from the Lawe, that they may do those things that are contrarie thereunto, and omit those thinges that are good, but it is to do good thinges and abstaine from wicked thinges, not through compulsion or necessitie of the Lawe, but by free loue and with pleasure, euen as if no Law commaunded them, and their owne nature brought them hereunto, as in deede it doth, howbeit the new nature of the spirit, not that olde nature of the flesh. For as there is neede of no Lawe for the body, which may compell it to eate, to drinke, to digest, to sleepe, to go, to stand, to sit, and to do the other workes of nature, for that it is ready to do them of it owne nature, when the case so requireth, and when it is meete, without all respect either of reward or punishment: and may not vntitly be said, as concerning these thinges, not to be vnder a law, notwithstanding thereupon nothing lesse followeth, then that it doth therefore abstaine from such workes, vnto which in deede it so much more applieth it selfe as they are lesse commaunded, and are more naturall vnto it: After the same sort altogither doth the godly man behaue himselfe concerning the workes of godlines, he is caried to the doing of them by that his new nature of the spirit, albeit there were no lawe at all, and all both hope of reward, and feare of punishment were awaye. This onely is the true libertie of a Christian man, and the deliueraunce of him from the lawe, whereof Paul speaketh 1. Tim. 1: The Lawe is not giuen vnto a righteous man. Which is as much as if he had said: A righteous man of his owne accord doth good thinges, and abstaineth from euell, hauing no regard either of reward or of punishment. The same thing also he meaneth by that saying Rom. 6: Ye are not vnder the Lawe, but vnder Grace, that is, ye are sonnes, not seruaunts: Ye liue holily, being compelled or enforced with nothing, but of your free and of it selfe ready will. To the same effect pertaineth that saying also Rom. 8: Ye haue not receiued the spirit of bondage to feare againe, but ye haue receiued the Spirit of adoption of the sonnes. The Lawe maketh a fearfull, that is, a right seruile and cainish spirit, but Grace giueth the free spirit of sonnes, like vnto Abels, by Christ the blessed seede of Abraham.

What it is, not to be vnder the Law.

A similitude.

Whereof the 51. Psalme speaketh: Stablish me with thy free spirit. Whereupon in the 118. Psalme Christian people are said to be of a free will.

Moreouer Christ hath so fulfilled the Lawe, that he onely of all mankynde hath of his owne accord satisfied it, being with no thing compelled or enforced thereunto, neither is any other able to do the same, vnles he receiue it of him, and by him: And therefore Paul saith here: He was made vnder the Lawe, that he might redeeme them, which were vnder the Lawe. The fifte thing therefore that Paul here commendeth vnto vs to be beleeued, is, that Christ for our sake was made vnder the Lawe, that he might deliuer vs from the bondage of the Law, and of vnwilling seruaunts make vs free sonnes: whereupon he saith: That he might redeeme them which were vnder the Lawe, that is, might deliuer them from the Law. Now he deliuereth from the Lawe by the meanes aforesaid, not by destroying or vtterly abolishing the Lawe, but by fulfilling it, and giuing a free spirit, which shall do all thinges willingly, without any respect either of the threatninges or the promises of the Lawe, no otherwise then if there were no lawe at all giuen, and is caried thereunto of his owne nature. After which sort Adam and Eue were effected before they had synned. But by what meanes is this spirit giuen & libertie gotten? No otherwise then by faith. For he that truly beleeueth, that Christ came for this cause, that he might deliuer vs from the Lawe, and that he hath deliuered him already, he, I say, hath in deede receiued the spirit of libertie, and doth verily obtaine that which he beleeueth: for both faith and this spirit of sonnes come together. Whereupon Paul sayth here: that Christ hath deliuered vs from the Lawe, for this, that we might receiue the adoption of the sonnes: both which come vnto vs by faith. Thus therefore we haue those fiue thinges, whereof Paul admonished vs in this so plentifull and fruitfull a place.

Why Christ was made vnder the Law.

How Christ deliuereth frō the Law.

How the spirit of libertie is obtained.

But here riseth a question: For asmuch as to be vnder the Law, is to be subiect to the Lawe by compulsion, and to obey the Law no otherwise then vnwillingly, so that none of them which are vnder the Lawe, are able to satisfie the Lawe, why Paul sayth, that Christ was made vnder the Lawe. I aunswere, that the Apostle maketh a verie great differēce betweene Christ, who was made vnder the Lawe, and other men which are borne vnder the Lawe.

A question.

The answer.

Great differēce between

Lawe. For whereas he sayth that Christ was made vnder the Lawe, he would signifie, that Christ did put himselfe vnder the Lawe of his owne accord, and was with his will made subiect vnto it of the Father, when as he might not haue bin vnder the Lawe. But we were vnder the Lawe, being the seruaunts of the Lawe by nature, and bearing the dominion thereof vnwillingly: as Christ was willingly, not by nature, and against his will. Wherefore there is as great difference betweene, To be made vnder the Lawe, and, To be vnder the Lawe by nature, as betweene these, To be subiect to the Lawe of free will, and, To be subiect to the Lawe by seruile constraint. It was free vnto Christ, to be vnder the Law, or not to be vnder it, and he made himselfe subiect to it of his owne accord, that he might most diligently do all thinges that the Law requireth: but we were vnder the Lawe, euen against our will.

Christes being vnder the Law & ours.

It is one thing, to be made vnder the Lawe, & an other to be vnder the Lawe by nature.

Thou mayst see a resemblaunce hereof in Peter, and the Angell which came into the prison to Peter to deliuer him. Both of them were then in the prison, but Peter was there being cast into it of Herode, not of his owne accord, wherein he was also to abide, for he could not go forth when he would. But the Angell went into the prison of his owne accord, whereupon it was free for him also to go forth when he would: he was there onely for Peters sake and not for his owne, and freely euen at his owne will, whom when Peter heard and followed, it was free for him also to go forth of the prison, whereas before it was not. This prison is the Lawe: Peter is our conscience: The Angell is Christ. Christ being absent, our conscience is held captiue of the Lawe, and being vnwilling of it selfe, is moued vnto good thinges by the threatninges and promises thereof, and is tied and bound vnto honest thinges with these, as with two chaines. The keepers of this prison are the teachers of the Lawe, which declare the force of the Lawe vnto vs. So we being bound in the prison of the Lawe, Christ commeth vnto vs, and willingly maketh himselfe subiect to the Lawe, and doth the workes of the Lawe of his owne accord, which we did bend our selues to do against our wills, yea and doth them for our sake, that he may ioyne vs vnto him, and also bring vs out together with himselfe. For he may easily go forth, who is held in the prison by no necessitie. If now we cleaue vnto him, and follow him, we also do

Ours, and Christs being vnder ỹ Law, and our deliueraunce frō ỹ same most excellently resembled.

goe forth. But this cleauing to him and following him is nothing els, then to beleeue in him, and not to dout that he became man, and was made subiect to the lawe for thy saluations sake. Togither with this fayth commeth the spirit, he byandby maketh thee ready and willing to do with pleasure all thinges that the Lawe requireth: and so truly deliuereth thee from the captiuitie of the Lawe, those chaines of threatninges and promises fall of from thee, and thou mayst now go whither thou list, that is, thou mayst liue according to thine owne will, or rather according to the wil of the holy Ghost ruling all thinges in thee: finally what good thinges soeuer thou doest, thou doest them from the heart, and with great pleasure.

Christ made vnder ỹ Law after two sorts.

Moreouer, that it may be made more plaine, after what sort Christ made himselfe subiect to the Lawe, we must vnderstand that he was made vnder the Lawe after two sorts: both for that he did perfectly performe the workes of the Lawe, and also for that he suffered and ouercame the curse and punishment thereof for our sake. For he was circumcised, presented in the temple, and the time of the purification being finished, was obedient to his parents. All which thinges he might haue omitted, being Lord of the Lawe, and ouer all. Howbeit he applied himselfe to these thinges freely of his owne will, not being either compelled by any feare, or allured by any hope. In outward workes he was in the meane season altogether like vnto them which were vnder the Law, that is, which did the workes of the Law against their wills, inasmuch as his free Spirit was hidden from others, euen as also the seruile and constrained will of others is hidden. And so he both was vnder the Lawe, and not vnder the Lawe. He behaued himselfe outwardly in workes as they which are vnwillingly held vnder the Lawe, when as notwithstanding he was not vnder the Lawe as they, but of his owne free will. Wherefore in respect of his workes he was vnder the Lawe, but in respect of his will he was free from the Lawe. But we as well by will as by workes are vnder the Lawe by nature, for that we do workes according to the rule of the Lawe, of necessitie, yea and we do them with that will which the Lawe constraineth and vrgeth, inasmuch as we do not endeuour to do them of our owne accord. Christ made himselfe subiect to the punishment of the Lawe also for our sakes of his owne will. He did not onely per-

How we are vnder ỹ Law.

formne

forme those workes which the Lawe commaundeth, but he suffered the punishment also which was due to vs being transgressors thereof. The Lawe condemneth to death and the eternall curse all those that continue not in all thinges that are written in the booke of the Lawe to do them, as Paule Gal. 3. reciteth out of Moses Leuit. 18. Now it is declared at large before, that the Lawe is fulfilled of no man, but that all men are against their willes held captiues of the Law, wherefore euerie one is subiect to death and to the curse, so that there is no man subiect to the Lawe in respect of workes, and will, which is not also subiect to it in respect of the curse. For it curseth and condemneth all that do not performe it with their whole heart. But here Christ maketh intercession for them that be his, and the iudgement which we haue deserued, he taketh vpon himselfe, he suffered the punishment due vnto vs, willingly making himselfe subiect to death and the curse, that is, to eternall damnation, no otherwise then if he had transgressed the whole Lawe, and had more then all, deserued the sentence thereof against transgressours, when as he did not onely not breake the Lawe, but himselfe alone fulfilled it, yea and fulfilled it when as he ought nothing to it, so that he suffered otherwise then he deserued in two respects: both for that he had ought nothing to the Lawe, if he had not obserued it, and also for that moreouer he most diligently obserued it, so that if the Law had had especiall dominion ouer him, yet had he come in no daunger thereof. But on the other side whereas we suffer, we suffer by double right: both for that by the transgression of the Lawe we haue deserued all the punishment thereof, & also for that, if we had deserued nothing, yet being creatures we ought to be obedient to the will of our Creator.

Why Christ was made vnder the Law.

Hereof it now plainly appeareth, what this meaneth, that Christ was made vnder the Lawe, that he might redeeme them which liue vnder the lawe: for our sakes, for our sakes, I say, and not for his owne he performed that, and that of no necessitie, but of his great loue toward vs: and thereby he hath declared his vnspeakeable both goodnes and mercy toward vs, being made accursed for vs, that he might deliuer vs from the curse of the lawe. He willingly made himselfe subiect to the iudgement of the lawe, & did himselfe beare the sentēce pronounced against vs, that as many of vs as do beleeue in him, might be free for euer.

By fayth we enioy an incomparable treasure.

Whereby marke what an incomparable treasure faith bringeth vnto thee, whereby thou enioyest Christ and all his workes, that thou mayst trust vnto them no otherwise then if thou thy selfe hadst done them. For Christ did them not for himselfe, whom surely they could profit nothinge, he hauing no neede of any thinge, but by them he layd vp the treasure of saluation for vs, whereunto we should trust, and being made blessed might enioye it: With which fayth alse the spirit of the sonnes commeth, which beareth witnes with our spirit, that we are the sonnes and heires of God. What should God nowe adde vnto these? How can a mynde hearing these thinges containe it selfe, that it should not loue God againe with a most ardent affection, and be most sweetely delighted in him? What in any wise maye come to be done or suffered, which thou wouldest not willingly take vpon thee with exceeding ioye, and most high prayse of God, with a reioycing and triumphing mynde? Which mynde if thou wantest, it is a certaine argument of a faint or surely a dead fayth: for the greater thy fayth is, so much more ready also and willinge is thy mynde to those thinges, which God either sendeth or commaundeth. This in deede is the true deliueraunce from the Lawe, and the damnation of the Lawe, that is, from synne and death, which deliueraunce commeth to vs by Christ. Yet not so, that there is nowe no lawe or death, but that they do not now trouble the beleeuers any thinge, that is, they are as though they were not. For the Lawe can not conuince them of synne, neither can death confound them: but by fayth they most happily passe from synne and death to righteousnes and life.

How mens ordinances, ceremonies &c. are to be obserued.

Here Munkes, Nunnes &c. were to be exhorted, if there were as yet left any place with them for counsell and admonition, that they would obserue their ordinaunces, ceremonies, prayers, apparell, and such like, as Christ obserued the lawe, by which meanes surely they should bring vnto them no damnation: That is, that they would set the fayth of Christ in the first place, and commit the rule of their heart vnto him, acknowledgeing that by that fayth onely they do obtaine righteousnes and saluation: and that all their ordinaunces & workes do auaile nothing hereunto. Againe that they would make themselues subiect to them of their owne accord, in no other respect, then that by them they might

might serue their neighbours, and subdue the arrogancie of the flesh. But now seing they are occupied in them with this double erroneous opinion, as though they were necessarie to saluation and righteousnes, and if they did not obserue them, they should grieuously synne, they are vnto them a most certaine destruction, nothing but delusion and synne, whereby with their great affliction they draw vnto hell, where they shall fully suffer the vexations and torments vnder the Abbat the deuell, which being miserable and foolish men they haue here begon. For all their life doth vtterly disagree with the sayth of the sonnes, and that which belongeth onely to sayth, to wit to iustifie and saue vs, they attribute to their workes. Wherefore these men can not both thus sticke vnto their ordinaunces, and therewithall haue faith, which suffereth it selfe to be addicted to no certaine workes, but what thinges soeuer the Lord either sendeth or commaundeth, or the necessitie and neede of our neighbour requireth, it suffreth and doth them with great willingnes & ioy. These he that is endued with faith, counteth his workes, hauing in the meane season no regard of Masses, or fasting, which some appoint to certaine dayes, of choise of apparell, of meates, of persons, of places and such like, yea he greatly disalloweth of these, inasmuch as they trouble Christian libertie. These thinges shall suffize to haue bin spoken concerning the exposition of this place of Paul, where about the matter it selfe required to spend so many wordes, forasmuch as the nature of faith is so vnknowen. For vnles thou do well vnderstand the nature of faith, thou shalt perceiue nothing or very litle in the writinges of Paul.

Verse 6. And becausé ye are sonnes, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Sonne into your hearts, which cryeth, Abba, Father.

Here we see verie plainly, that the holy Ghost commeth vnto the Saincts by no workes but by faith alone, for Paul saith: And becausé ye are sonnes, God hath sent forth the Spirit, &c. Sõnes beleeue, when seruaunts onely worke: sonnes are free from the Lawe, seruaunts are held vnder the Lawe, as appeareth plainly by those thinges that are before spoken. But how commeth it to passe that he saith: Becausé ye are sonnes, God hath sent forth the Spirit, &c. seeing it is before said: that by the comming of the A question.

spirit we are chaunged from seruaunts vnto the state of sonnes, so that the spirit must be first sent vnto vs, before we are sonnes? But here as though we could be sonnes before the comming of the spirit, he sayth: Because ye are sonnes, &c. To this question we must aunswere, that Paul speaketh here after the same sort that he spake before: Before the fulnes of time came, we weare in bondage vnder the rudimēts of the world. All the elect, which are predestinate of the Lord that they shall become sonnes, are counted in ỳ place of sonnes with God. Therefore he saith rightly: Because ye are sonnes, that is, because the state of sonnes is appointed vnto you frō euerlasting, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Sonne, to wit, that he might finish it in you, & make you such, as he hath long since of his goodnes determined that he should make you. Moreouer he calleth him the spirit of ỳ Sonne of God, that he might continue in commending vnto vs this benefit of God, that he hath chosen vs to be sonnes. For Christ is the Sonne of God, and that most beloued. Now if the father giue vnto vs his spirit, he will make vs like to his onely begotten sonne, his true sonnes and heires, that we may with certaine confidence crie with Christ, Abba, Father, being his brethren, and felow heires with him. Wherin ỳ Apostle surely hath notable set forth the goodnes of God, which maketh vs partakers with Christ, and causeth vs to haue all thinges common with him, so that we liue, and are ledde by the same spirit. Moreouer these wordes of the Apostle do shew, both that the holy Ghost is an other from Christ, and yet doth proceede from him, when as he calleth him his spirit. The spirit in deede dwelleth in the godly, and no man will say that he is their spirit, as here Paul maketh him the holy spirit of Christ, saying: God hath sent forth ỳ spirit of his Sonne, that is of Christ. For he is the spirit of God, & cōmeth from God to vs, and is not ours, vnles one will say after this sort: my holy spirit, as we say: my God, my Lord. Wherefore whereas he is here said to be ỳ holy spirit of Christ, it proueth him to be God, as of whom that spirit is sent, & is peculiarly counted his spirit.

The answer.

Furthermore, Christians may perceiue by this place, whether they haue in themselues the holy Ghost, to wit, this spirit of the sonne, whether they heare his voice in themselues. For Paul saith, that he cryeth in the hearts which he possesseth, Abba, Father: according as he sayth also Rom. 8: We haue receiued

How we may know whether ỳ holy Ghost dwell in vs or not.

the

the Spirit of adoptiō, whereby we crie Abba, Father. Now thou heareſt this voyce, when thou fyndeſt ſo much faith in thy ſelfe, that thou doeſt aſſuredly without any doutinge preſume, not only that thy ſynnes be forgiuen thee, but alſo that thou art the beloued ſonne of God, which being certaine of eternal ſaluatiō, dareſt both call him father, and be delighted in him with a ioyfull and moſt confident heart. Thou muſt be ſo certaine hereof, that thou canſt not be more certaine of thy life, & muſt ſooner ſuffer death, and helliſh torments, then ſuffer this truſt and confidence to be taken from thee. For to dout any thing herein were no ſmall reproch and contumelie to the death of Chriſt, as though that had not obtained all thinges for vs, and ought not farre more effectually to prouoke and encourage vs to haue a good truſt in God, then all our ſynnes and tentations are able to put vs out of hope and fray vs from it. It may be in deede that thou ſhalt be ſo tempted, that thou ſhalt feare and doute of thine adoption, and thinke plainly that God is not a fauourable father, but a wrathfull reuēger of ſynners, as it fell out with Iob and many other ſaincts, but in ſuch a conflict this truſt & confidence that thou art a ſonne ought to preuaile and ouercome, or els thou ſhalt come into a miſerable and deſperate caſe.

When one of Cains broode heareth theſe thinges, he is as it were beſide himſelfe by reaſon of admiration and aſtoniſhment. Fye, ſayth he, awaye with this arrogancie, and this moſt pernitious errour. God turne this mynde from me, that I do not preſume to thinke that I am the ſonne of God: I am a ſynner, moſt miſerable and wretched, and I will neuer eſteeme more of my ſelfe. But thou which deſireſt to belong vnto Chriſt, flie this kynde of men, no otherwiſe then moſt hurtfull enemies of Chriſtian faith, and of thy ſaluation. We alſo know that we are ſynners, and verie miſerable and wretched: but here we muſt not wepe or conſider, what we either do, or are, but what Chriſt is, and what he hath done for our ſake. It is not ſpoken here of our nature, but of the grace of God, which ſo farre exceedeth our ſynnes, as heauen is higher then the earth, and the eaſt is diſtant from the weſt, as the 103. Pſalme ſayth: Now if it ſeeme vnto thee a great honour that thou art the ſonne of God, as in deede it is verie great, cōſider that it is no leſſe meruelous, that the ſonne of God for this cauſe did come, was borne of a woman, and made

Though of our ſelues we be miſerable ſynners, yet we may aſſuredly perſwade our ſelues, that through Chriſt we are the ſonnes of God.

vnder the Lawe, that thou mightest become the sonne of God. These are great benefites of God, & do cause in the elect a great trust and confidence in the goodnes of God, and a spirit which is afraide of nothing, but is bold and able to do all thinges. Contrariwise the religion of those of Cains broode, as it is a thing meruelous strait and carefull, so doth it make heartes exceeding fearfull, which serue to no vse, but are vnapt to all thinges, fit neither to suffer or do any thing, which tremble and are afraide euen at the shaking of the leafe of a tree, as it was before spoken of them Leuit. 26.

Wherefore thou must lay vp these wordes of the Apostle well in thy minde, thou must feele this crie of the spirit, which crieth so in the hearts of al ỹ faithful. For how shouldest thou not heare the crie of thine owne heart? Neither doth the Apostle say that he doth whisper, speake, yea or syng, it is greater then all these which the spirit doth in thy heart, he crieth out a maine, that is, with all the heart. Whereupon it is saide Rom. 8, that he maketh request for vs with sighes that can not be expressed, and that he beareth witnes with our spirit that we are the children of God: how therefore can it be, that our heart should not heare this crie, sighes, and testimonie of the spirit? Howbeit hereunto tentations and aduersitie are very profitable, they moue to crie, and do exceedingly stirre vp the spirit. Notwithstanding we foolish men do greatly feare and flie the crosse, wherefore it is no meruell if we do neuer feele the crie of the spirit, and do continually remaine like them of Cains broode. But if thou doest not feele this crie, take heede that thou be not idle and slothfull, neither secure, pray instantly, for thou art in an euell case. And yet do not desire, that thou maist feele nothing but this crie of the spirit, thou must feele also an other terrible crie made, whereby thou mayst be prouoked and vrged to this crie of the spirit, which happeneth to all the saincts: That is the crie of synnes, which call most strongly and instantly vnto desperation, but this crie must be ouercome of the spirit of Christ, by godly calling vpō the Father, and crying for his grace, that the trust and confidence of grace may become greater then desperation. Wherefore this crie of the spirit is nothing els, but to be with all our heart touched with a very strong, firme, and vnmoueable trust of most deare sonnes toward God, as our most tender and fauourable Father.

Aduersitie stirreth vp the spirit.

The crie of the spirit.

Hereby

Hereby we may see howe farre a Christian life exceedeth nature, which can doe nothing lesse then trust so in God, and call vpon him as a Father, but is alwayes afraide, and vttereth a voyce which is a witnes of exceeding feare: Wo is me, how cruell and vntolerable a Iudge art thou, O God? howe heauy is thy iudgement vnto me? As Cain sayd Gen. 4: My iniquitie is more then that it may be forgiuen. Thou hast cast me out this day from the vpper face of the earth, and from thy face shall I be hid, yea it shal come to passe that euery one that findeth me shall slay me, &c. This is a terrible and dreadfull crye, which is necessarily heard of all such as be of Cains brood, forasmuch as they trust to them selues and their owne workes, and put not their trust in the sonne of God, neither weie and consider that he was sent of the Father, made of a woman, made vnder the lawe, much lesse that all these thinges were done for their saluation. They are continually tormented in their owne works, the miserable men doe in vaine goe about by them to helpe them selues, and to obtaine the grace of God. And while their vngodlines is not herewith content, it beginneth to persecute euen the sonnes of God, as it is alwayes wont to doe, yea at the last they growe vnto such crueltie, that after the example of their father Cain they can not rest, vntil they slay their righteous brother Abell, in whome they doe also kill vnto them selues Christ. Then the bloode of righteous Abel crieth vnto heauen against vnrighteous Cain, neither ceaseth it to cry vntill the Lord hath reuenged it. He asketh those Cains of their brother Abel, yea of Christ: but they deny all knowledge of Christ, which labour not to become the sonnes of God and heires by Christ, but to become righteous by their owne workes. In the meane season the bloode of Christ continually crieth out against them, euen nothing but punishment and vengeance, when as for the elect, it crieth by the spirit of Christ for nothing but grace & reconciliation.

A Christian life farre exceedeth nature.

The crie of them which trust in their owne works, and not in Christ.

The Apostle vseth here a Sirian, and a Greeke word, saying: Abba, Pater. For this word Abba in the Syrian tongue signifieth a Father, by which name at this day the chiefe of Monasteries are wont to be called, and by the same name Heremites in time past being holy men, did call their Presidents, at the last by vse it was also made a Latin word. Wherefore that which Paul sayth is as much as: Father, Father, or if thou hadst rather, as,

Why the Apostle doubled the word, Father

My father. But what is the cause why the Apostle doth double the word, Father, that is, the crie of the spirit? I will by your leaue bringe forth my iudgement and opinion hereof. First I thinke that he would hereby shewe the force and straining of this holy cry. For when as we cal any with great affection, & through no small necessitie, we are wont eftsoones to double his name. Nowe because that sinne, and Cain doe alwayes goe about with desperation to stoppe this crie of the spirit for the grace of the father, it is neede surely to crie most strongly, and with a voice both doubled, and exceedingly strained forth, that is, the trust of the grace of the Father ought to be most stronge and not able to be ouercome. Againe such is the maner of the Scripture, to witnes the certaintie of a thing, sometime to double or iterate the words, as Ioseph did to Pharao Gen. 41. So here also the spirit twise calleth vpon the Father, whereby it may shewe the certaintie of his fatherly fauour and grace. For the trust hereof ought to be no lesse certaine, then great and vnmoueable. Finally it is meete also to persever, which againe this doubling of the name of father doth note vnto vs. For as soone as we begin to call God Father, Satan with all his band moueth warre against vs, and omitteth no meanes to wrest from vs this trust of sonnes toward God our Father, wherefore thother Father must be diligently doubled, that is, our trust and confidence must be confirmed, neither must we euer ceasse from calling vpon this Father, but must most earnestly continue in this crie of the spirit, whereby we may obtaine a certen sure experience of his fatherly goodnes, by which our trust in him may be made most certaine and safe. And perhaps Paul had respect hereunto, when he first set downe Abba, which is a word straunge to them, to whom he wrote, after adding Pater, that is Father, a familiar word and of their owne language, meaning to signifie hereby, that the beginning of so great trust in God is vnaccustomed and euen straunge vnto men, but that when the mind hath a while exercised it, and continued in it although assayled with tentations, it becommeth euen familiar and almost naturall, that we now enioy God as a domesticall Father, and doe in euery thing most confidently call vpon him.

Verse 7. Wherefore now thou art not a seruaunt, but a sonne: if thou be a sonne, thou art also an heire of

of God through Christ.

Nowe, sayth he, that is after the comming of the spirit of the sonnes, after the knowledge of Christ, thou art not a seruaunt. For as it is sayd, a sonne and a seruaunt are so contrary one to an other, that the same man can not be both a sonne and a seruaunt. A sonne is free and willing, a seruaunt is compelled and vnwilling: a sonne liueth, and resteth in faith: a seruaunt in workes. And so by this place also it appeareth, that we can obtaine no saluation of God by workes, but before thou workest that which is acceptable vnto him, it is necessary that thou haue receiued of him and possesse saluation and all things, that thereupon workes may freely flow forth, to the honour of so gratious a father, and to the profit of thy neighbours, without any feare of punishment, or loking for reward. This, that which Paule sayth, proueth: If thou be a sonne, thou art also an heire. For it is sayd before, that we become the sonnes of God by faith, without any workes, & therefore heires also, as this place witnesseth: for by nature they that are sonnes, the same also are heires. But if this inheritance of the Father be nowe thyne by fayth, surely thou art riche in all good things, before thou hast wrought any thinge. For howe should it be, ỹ by faith thou art the heire of God, wout any workes through onely grace, and that thou mayst againe first merit it by workes? Wherefore the case standeth, as I often times say: To a man that is baptized and beleueth in Christ, the heauenly inheritance of the Father is already giuen at once, that is, all good thinges, they are only hid as yet by faith, for that the maner of the present life can not suffer, that he shoulde enioye them being reuealed. Whereupon Paule sayth Rom. 8: Ye are saued, but by hope, for ye doe not as yet see it, but doe yet waite, when the possession of your good thinges shall be reuealed. And 1. Pet. 1. it is sayd: Your saluation is reserued in heauen and prepared for you, to be shewed in the last time. Wherefore the workes of a Christian ought not to haue regard of merit, which is the maner of seruaunts, but onely of the vse and commoditie of his neighbours, that he doe not liue and worke to himselfe, but to his neighbour, whereby he may truely liue to the glory of God. For by faith he is rich in all good thinges, and truely blessed. Nowe the Apostle addeth, through Christ, lest that any thinke that so great inheri-

A sonne and a seruaunt doe greatly differ.

We can not obtaine saluation by workes.

VVhereunto the workes of a Christian ought to be referred.

Although we are saued frely & without all merit in respect of our selues yet Christ hath merited and with a deare price purchased saluation for vs.

tance commeth vnto vs freely, and without al cost. For although it be giuen vnto vs without our cost, and without all our merit, yet it cost Christ a deare price, who, that he might purchase it for vs, was made vnder the lawe, and satisfied it for vs both by life & also by death. So those benefits which of loue we bestowe vpon our neighbour, doe come vnto him freely, and without any charges or labour vnto him, notwithstanding they cost vs some thing, inasmuch as we bestow vpon him, although freely and of meere goodnes, yet those thinges that are our owne, whether it be labour or part of our substance, euen as Christ hath bestowed those thinges that be his vpon vs.

And thus hath Paule called backe his Galathians from the teachers of workes, which preached nothing but the law, peruerting the Gospell of Christ. All which thinges are very necessary to be marked of vs also. For the Pope with his Prelats and Monks, hath now too long a time with intruding and vrging his lawes, which are foolish and most pernitious, inasmuch as they doe euery where disagree with the word of God, seduced almost the whole world from the Gospell of Christ, & plainly extinguished the faith of sonnes, according as the Scripture hath in diuers places very manifestly prophesied of his kingdom. Wherefore let euery one that desireth to obtaine saluation, most diligently take heede of him and all his Apostles, no otherwise then of Satan him selfe, and his chiefe and most pernitious Apostles.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, CONCERNING FAITH AND DIFFIDENCE IN daunger and trouble.

Matth. 8.

Verse 23. When Iesus was entered into the ship, his Disciples followed him.

24 And

24. And behold, there aroſe a great tempeſt in the ſea, ſo that the ſhip was couered with waues, but he was aſleepe.

25. Then his Diſciples came, and awoke him, ſaying, Maiſter, ſaue vs, we periſh.

26. And he ſayd vnto them: Why are ye feareful, O ye of litle faith? Then he aroſe, and rebuked the windes and the ſea: & ſo there was a great calme.

27. And the men merueiled, ſaying: What man is this, that both the windes & the ſea obey him?

ACcording to the hiſtorie this text ſetteth before vs an example of faith and diffidence: wherof we may learne both what a ſtronge and inuincible thinge faith is, and that it muſt be exerciſed & tryed euen in great matters, and full of perill: and alſo howe deſperate a thing on the other ſide diffidence is, and howe full of feare and trembling, which can neuer doe any thinge rightly or wel. This doth experience moſt liuely ſet forth in the Diſciples. They, when they entered into the ſhip with Chriſt, and whileſt there was calmnes in the lake, were nothing diſquieted in mind, neither felt any feare. Then if one ſhould haue aſked them whether they beleeued, they would haue aunſwered without dout that they did beleeue. For they did not know that their hart did truſt in that quietnes, for that all troubles were abſent, and therefore did reſt vpon a thinge viſible, and not vpon the inuiſible grace of God. Which then was made manifeſt, as ſoone as the tempeſt was riſen, and the waues did couer the ſhip: for by and by all their truſt and confidence ceaſſed, for that the quietnes and calmnes whereunto they truſted was taken away, and diffidence, which before when al things were proſperous, did lurke in their minds, did then appeare. For this is the nature of diffidence, that it beleeueth or knoweth no more then it feeleth. Forasmuch therefore as it had poſſeſſed the brefts of the Apoſtles, they felt nothing now but the feareſull tempeſt, and the waues couering the ſhip, they ſaw the ſea ſwelling and greatly raging to threaten nothing

How deſperate & feareſull a thinge diffidence is, it appeareth by the example of Chriſtes Diſciples.

but death. These thinges onely did they thinke vpon, these onely did they consider, and therefore could there be no measure or ende of feare and trembling in their mindes: the more they weyed in their mind the perill, so much more were they terrified, and seemed euen now to sticke in the very iawes of death, hoping for no life or deliuerance. And as they could not so much as thinke any thing els because of their vnbeliefe, so all comfort also was farre from them. For diffidence or vnbeliefe hath nothing whereunto it may trust or flee, wherfore when outward aduersitie commeth, it admitteth nothing into the mind but it, and therefore it can neuer feele any peace or quietnes while this remaineth. So in hell, where diffidence exerciseth full tyrannie, there can neuer be any intermission of desperation, trembling and terrour.

What faith doth in trouble & daunger.

But if the Disciples had bene then endued with a sound faith, and if it had ruled in this daunger, it would haue remoued from the mind the wind and all this tempest, & in steede of these would wholy haue thought vpon the power of God and his grace promised, whereunto it would no otherwise haue trusted, then if it had sate vpon a most stronge rocke farre from the sea and from al tempest. For this is the chiefe vertue and cunning of faith, that it seeth those thinges which are not seene or felt, and seeth not those thinges which are felt, yea which are now fore vpon vs, and doe presse & vrge vs. As on the contrary side diffidence seeth nothing but that which it feeleth, neither can it rest vpon any other thing but that which it feeleth. For this cause those thinges are of God layd vpon faith, which the whole worlde is not able to beare, as sinnes, death, the worlde, and the deuil: neither suffereth he it to be occupied with small matters. For who flieth not death? who is not terrified & ouercome of it? Against this inuincible faith standeth, yea it couragiously setteth vpon it, which otherwise tameth all thinges, and ouercommeth and swalloweth vp that vnsatiable deuourer of life. So euen the whole worlde is not able to bring vnder and subdue the flesh, but it rather bringeth vnder and maketh the worlde subiect vnto it, & beareth rule ouer it, so that he liueth carnally whosoeuer is of the worlde. But faith subdueth this subduer of all other, holdeth it in subiection, and teacheth it not onely to be ruled, but also to obey. Likewise who is able to beare the hatred and furie, ignominie and persecution of the worlde? who doth not yeelde vnto it and is oppressed with it? But faith euen laugheth

The force of faith, whereby death, the world, Satan and sinne are ouercome.

laugheth at all the iniquitie, rage, and furie thereof, and maketh that vnto it selfe matter of spirituall ioy, wherewith other are euen killed. It doth no otherwise behaue it selfe against Satan also. Who is able to ouercome him, which practizeth so many craftes and wiles, wherby he stayeth and hindereth the truth, the worde of God, faith, and hope, and soweth against them innumerable errours, sects, delusions, heresies, desperations, superstitions, and such kind of abominations without number? All the worlde is to him as a sparke of fire to a fountaine of water, it is wholy subdued vnto him in these euills, as (alas) we both see and trie. But it is faith which troubleth him, for it is not onely not made subiect to his delusions, but it also discouereth and confoundeth them, that they be no more of any importance, that they are able to doe nothing but doe vanish away, as we haue experience at this day by the decaping and vanishing of the Papacie and indulgences. Finally, sinne hath that force, that that which is euen the least, can not be appeased or extinguished of any creature, that it doth not gnawe and teare the conscience, yea if all men should goe about together to comfort the conscience wherein sinne hath begun to liue, they should goe about it in vaine. But faith is that noble Champion, which ouercommeth and extinguisheth euery sinne, yea if all the sinnes which the whole world hath committed from the beginning were layde vpon one heape, it would extinguish and abolish them all together. Is not faith therefore most mightie and of incomparable strength, which dareth encounter with so many and so mightie enemies, and beareth away the certaine victorie? Wherefore Iohn sayth in his first Epistle chap. 5: This is that victorie that hath ouercome this world, euen our faith.

Faith obtayneth not the victorie ouer the enemies of our soules without fore fight & conflicts.

Howbeit this victorie commeth not with rest and quietnes, we must trie the fight, not without blood and woundes, that is, we must needes feele sinne, death, the flesh, the deuill, and the world, yea and that assayling vs so grieuously and with so great force, that the hart of man doe thinke that he is past all hope, that sinne hath ouercome, and the deuill gotten the vpper hande, and on the contrary side very litle feele the force of faith. We see an example of this fight here in the Disciples, for the waues did not onely strike the ship, but did euen couer it, that nothing could be now looked for, but that it should be drowned, especially Christ being a-

sleepe, and knowing not of this perill: all hope was then past, life seemed to be ouercome, and death appeared to haue the victorie. But as it fel out with the Disciples in this tentation, so also doth it fall out, and must fall out with all the godly in all kind of tentations, which are of sinne, the deuill, and the world. In the tentation of sinne we must needes feele the conscience thrall vnto sinnes, the wrath of God and hellish paynes to hange ouer vs, and all thinges to be in that case, as though we were past all recouerie. Likewise when we haue conflict with the deuill, it must appeare, as though truth shoulde giue place to errour, and Satan shoulde driue the worde of God out of the whole worlde, and he him selfe reigne for a God with his delusions & deceits. Neither standeth the case any otherwise, when it commeth to passe that we are tryed of the world, it must needes be, that it should greatly rage and cruelly persecute vs, so that it shall seeme that no man at all is able to stand, that no man is able to obtayne safetie, or profes his faith: that Cain onely shall beare rule, and suffer his brother in no place.

Albeit we be in daunger & great distres, yet must we not be discouraged, but beleeue that we shall be deliuered

But we must not iudge according to such feeling and outward appearance of things, but according to faith. The present example ought to stirre vs vp hereunto, & to be receiued of vs in steede of speciall comfort. For we learne hereof, that albeit sinnes doe vrge vs, death disquiet vs, the world rage against vs, and the deuill lay snares for vs, that is, although the waues doe couer the ship, yet we must not be discouraged. For although thy conscience being wounded doth feele sinne, and the wrath and indignation of God, yet shalt thou not therefore be plunged in hell. Neither shalt thou therefore die, although euen the whole world hate and persecute thee, and gape so wide to deuoure thee, as the morning spreadeth forth it selfe: They are onely waues, which falling vpon thy ship doe terrifie thee, and compell thee to crie out, we perish, Lord saue vs. Thou hast therefore in the former part of this text, the nature of faith set forth, how it is wont and ought to behaue it selfe in tentation, also howe desperate a thinge diffidence is, and nothing to be counted of. The other part commendeth vnto vs loue in Christ, whereby he was brought so farre, that he brake of his sleepe, arose, and counted the daunger that his Disciples were in for his owne, and helped them freely, asking or looking for nothing of them therefore. Euen as it is the

nature

nature of Christian loue to doe all things freely and of good will to the glorie of God, and profit of our neighbours, seeking to it selfe nothing thereby. For the exercising of which loue man adopted of God, is left in the earth, euen as Christ being made man liued in the earth that he might do for vs, as he witnesseth of him selfe: I came not to be serued, but to serue, and to giue my life for the ransome of many. The nature of Christian loue. *Matth.* 20. 28

The Allegories of this deede.

In this deede Christ hath set forth the life of Christians, and the state of such as preach and teache the worde of God. The ship signifieth the Church, the sea the world, the winde the deuill, the Disciples of Christ are the Preachers and godly Christians: Christ the truth, the Gospell and faith. Now, before that Christ and his Disciples enter into the ship, the sea is calme, & the wind quiet, but when Christ with his Disciples are entred in, by and by ariseth a tempest. This is that which he sayd: I came not to send peace but the sword. For if Christ would suffer the world to liue after his owne maner, and would not reproue the workes thereof, it would be quiet enough. But now seeing that he preacheth that they which are counted wise men, are fooles: they that are counted righteous, are sinners: they that are counted rich, are not blessed, but miserable, it rageth & is in great furie. So thou maist at this daye finde wise men of this worlde, which in deede would suffer the Gospell to be preached, if the wordes of the Scripture shoulde be simply declared, and in the meane season the state of Ecclesiasticall persons not reproued: but as soone as thou shalt begin to condemne by the Scriptures all those thinges which haue bene hitherto brought in vnder a false name of religion, and to teach that they are to be reiected as being of no importance, thou preachest seditiously, and troublest the world with vnchristian doctrine. *Matth.* 10. 34 The world can not abide the sound and sincere preaching of the Gospell.

But how doth the present text pertaine vnto vs? A great tempest did arise, where that ship went, wherein Christ and his Disciples were. Other ships did passe the sea quietly, nothing tossed of the windes, this ship onely must be tossed and couered with waues, because Christ was caried in it. For the world can suffer any kind of preaching beside the preaching of Christ: the cause is, for that he condemneth all thinges of the world, and chalen- Why the world can not abide y

preaching of Christ. *Matth.* 12. 30. *Ioh.* 16. 8.

geth all righteousnes to him selfe, according to that which he saith: He that is not with me, is against me: and againe: The Spirit will reproue the worlde of sinne, of righteousnes, and of iudgement. He sayth not: will preach, but, will reproue, and not this or that man, but, the world, and whatsoeuer is in the world. Against this ship of Christ all this tempest is raysed, and it is brought into daunger. For the world doth not suffer his owne thinges to be condemned, but Christ can not allowe them, & if he should allow them, he had come in vaine. For if the world were wise by it selfe, and did knowe and followe the truth, what neede had there bene that Christ & his Disciples should preach? Wherfore it is not a small comfort to Christians, especially to Preachers, that they are certaine before, that as soone as they shal begin to preach Christ to the world, they must suffer persecution, & that it can not be otherwise. So that it is a sure signe, and therefore to be wished, that it is true Christian preaching, if it be tried with persecution, especially of the holy, learned and wise men of the worlde. As it is an vndouted signe also, that it is vnchristian preaching, if it be praysed commonly and honoured of the world, according to that saying Luke 6: Blessed are ye when men hate you, and put out your name as euill, for the Sonne of mans sake: for so did their fathers to the Prophets. Now marke how our spirituall men do behaue them selues, and of what sort their doctrine is: They haue got into their subiection the riches, glorie, and power of the world, and they that prayse them, enioy the honour and pleasures thereof, their case in all thinges agreeth with the case of the false Prophets, and yet they dare boast them selues to be Preachers and Teachers of Christ, and worshippers of God.

A comfort to true Preachers that they knowe before that they shal suffer persecution.

Of whom the Preachers of Gods word must looke for & desire helpe in the time of trouble and persecution.

The next thinge, whereby this deede doth comfort and encourage the Preachers of Christ, is, that it sheweth where helpe is to be asked, when a tempest is risen: to wit, not of the world, for not mans wisedom or power, but Christ him selfe, and he alone is able to helpe them. Him they must call vpon in euery distres with full confidence, in him they must trust, as his Disciples here did. For vnles they had beleeued that Christ was able to take away the daunger wherein they were, they would not haue awaked him, and prayed him to saue them: although their faith then was very weake, and very much diffidence was in them, for that they

they did not confidently commit them selues with him vnto daunger, douting nothing but he was able to deliuer them out of the middest of the sea, and from death it selfe. Hereof therefore let it be acknowledged as certaine, that as no Iudge or Moderator can be giuen to the word of God, but God onely, so there can be had no other maintainer or defender thereof: who as he sendeth it out whether he will without any merit or counsell of men, so he alone also will defende & preserue it without the ayde or strength of men: and therefore he that seeketh ayde vnto this word of men, shall without dout fall, being forsaken as well of men as of God.

Whereas Christ did sleepe, it giueth vs to vnderstand, that in the time of persecution he doth sometimes withdraw him selfe, & seemeth as though he slept, whiles that he giueth not strength & power valiantly to resist, the peace and tranquillitie of minde being now disturbed, but suffereth vs to wrastle and labour with our infirmitie for a while, that we may acknowledge how we are altogither nothing, and that all thinges doe depend on his grace and power. As Paule confesseth of him selfe 2. Cor. 1. that it behoued that he should be so pressed and troubled out of measure, that we should not trust in our selues but in God, which rayseth the dead. Such sleepe of God Dauid oftentimes felt, and maketh mention thereof in many places: Arise, awake, O Lorde: why sleepest thou? why doost thou forget vs? &c.

Christ sometimes in the time of persecution and trouble withdraweth him self & differreth his help for a while.

In a summe, the present text offereth vnto vs two principall thinges full of confidence and godly boldnes. The first, that when persecution is risen for the word of God, we may say: We knew that it would so come to passe. Christ is in the ship, therefore the sea so rageth, the windes trouble vs, the waues fall vpon vs as though they would drowne vs. But let them rage and be furious as much as they may: it is certaine, the sea and the windes doe obey Christ which is the other principall thinge which this text offereth. Persecution shall extend no farther, nor rage any lenger then he will, and albeit the waues doe euen ouerwhelme vs, yet must they be obedient at his becke. He is Lorde ouer all, wherefore nothing shall hurt vs: he onely endue vs with his grace, that we be not ouercome by vnbeliefe and so despeire, Amen.

Whereas the men merueiled and praysed the Lorde, as vnto whom the sea and windes doe obey, it signifieth that the Gospell and word of God is so farre from being extinguished by persecu-

The Gospel is more spread a-

broad and faith increased by persecution.

tion, that thereby it is spread farther abroad, and faith also is increased and becommeth stronger. Wherein it appeareth howe diuers the nature of this diuine good thinge is from the good thinges of the worlde, which decay by calamitie and misfortune, and are increased by prosperitie and fortunate affayres: But the kingdom of Christ is increased and strengthened by tribulation and aduersitie: but is diminished and weakned by peace and tranquillitie. Whereupon Paule sayth 2. Cor. 12: The Lordes power is made perfect through weakenes: which God performe in vs also, Amen.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, WHEREIN IS ENTREATED OF THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN.

2. *Cor.* 6.

Verse 1. SO we therefore as workers togither beseech you, that ye receiue not the grace of God in vaine.

2. For he sayth: I haue heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of saluation haue I succoured thee: beholde nowe the accepted time, behold now the day of saluation.

3. Let vs giue no occasion of offẽce in any thing, that our ministerie be not reprehended.

4. But in all things let vs behaue our selues as the Ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses.

5 In

5. In stripes, in prisons, in tumults, in labours.
6. In watchings, in fastings, in puritie, in knowledge, in long suffering, in kindnes, in the holy spirit, in loue vnfeyned.
7. In the word of truth, in the power of God, by the armour of righteousnes on the right hand and on the left,
8. By honour and dishonour, by euill report and good report, as deceiuers, and yet true:
9. As vnknowne, and yet knowne: as dying, and behold, we liue: as chastened, & yet not killed.
10. As sorrowing, & yet alway reioicing: as poore, and yet make many rich: as hauing nothing, & yet possessing all things.

THis is an admonition and exhortation to the Corinthians, to apply them selues to those thinges, which they did already knowe. The wordes surely are easie to be vnderstood, but hard to be done, and in vse most rare. For in such meruelous order and colours he painteth out Christian life, as it can not be pleasaunt to the flesh to behold. First he sayth: As workers togither we beseech you, he calleth the Ministers of ỹ word togither workers, as 1. Cor. 3. he also sayth: We togither are Gods labourers, ye are Gods husbandrie, and Gods building. Which is thus much in effect: We preach and labour in the worde among you by teaching & exhorting, but God inwardly with his spirit doth blesse and giue the encrease, lest that the outward labour in the word be in vaine. And so God is the inward and true Maister, which bringeth to passe all thinges, whom we serue in the office of outward preaching. Now he calleth him selfe & his fellowes such togither workers, lest they should contemne the outward word, as though they either had not neede of it, or had already sufficiētly attayned to the knowledge therof. For although God can alone by his spirit, without the outward word worke all things in the mindes of the elect, yet he will not doe it, but rather will vse togither wor- The Ministers of the word workers togither with God.

king preachers, & worke by their word when & where it pleaseth him. Forasmuch therfore as it seemeth good vnto God to giue to Preachers this office, name, & dignitie, that they be counted workers together with him, it is not lawfull for any man to chalenge either that learning or holines vnto him self, that he neglect euen neuer so simple a sermon wherein the word of God is preached, much lesse that he contemne it: for we know not when that time will come, when God by his Preacher will vouchsafe to accomplish his worke in vs.

The preaching of the Gospel doth not long cõtinue in one place sincere & vncorrupt

Secondly, the Apostle admonisheth of the daunger of losing ỹ light of the Gospel, when he sayth: that ye receiue not the grace of God in vaine. Wherby he giueth vs to vnderstand that ỹ preaching of the Gospel is not a perpetual, continuing & permanent doctrine, but rather that it is like raine that sodainly commeth & soone passeth away when as the Sunne and heat come byandby and take away al the moisture that is left thereof, and afterward scorch and hurt thinges neuertheles. This very experience proueth, for no man shall be able to bringe forth euen one place in the world, where the Gospell hath remained pure and sincere aboue the age of one man, but continued and increased while those liued by whose ministerie it began, they departing hence that also almost wholy departed, and byandby after followed heretikes and false teachers, with their delusions and false doctrine peruerting and corrupting all thinges. So Moses foretold his Israelites, that byandby after his death it should come to passe, that they should depart from the way of the Lorde, and corrupt their owne wayes, which the booke of Iudges witnesseth to haue come to passe. Moreouer the same booke sayth, that as often as any iudge which had called againe the word of the Lord did die, they fell againe forthwith to their vngodlines, & made all things worse and worse. So Ioas the king continued in his dutie so long as Iehoiada the Priest liued, who being dead, he began byandby to be a King vnlike him selfe, & left the office of a good and godly King. Act. 20. 29. Neither fell it out otherwise after Christ had receiued his Apostles to him selfe almost the whole world was filled with heresies and false doctrine. Which Paul pronounced before: I know this, sayth he, that after my departing shall grieuous wolues enter in among you, not sparing the flocke, &c. So standeth the case at this day also, the pure and sincere Gospel hath shined vnto vs, the

day

day of grace and saluation, and the acceptable time are present, but they shall shortly be ended if the world stand.

Moreouer, to receiue grace in vaine can be nothing els, then to heare the pure and sincere word of God, whereby the grace of God is preached and offered, and notwithstanding to embrace it with no diligence, neither to be chaunged or altered in life. By this vnthankfull slothfulnes we deserue to haue it taken away againe as being vnworthy of it. For we making so light of the Gospell are vndoutedly they which are bidden and called to the mariage, but whiles being busied about other matters we despise this grace, the good man of the house is angrie with vs, & sweareth that we shall neuer tast of his supper. The same doth Paule now here admonish of, that we take heede to our selues, least that we receiue the Gospell vnthankfully & without frute. Yea Christ also admonished vs of the same: VValke while ye haue the light, least the darkenes come vpon you. It ought surely to make vs more warie and heedefull, euen for that we suffered so grieuous and pernitious darkenes vnder the Pope. But we haue now forgotten all such thinges, no thankfulnes, no amendement is found among vs, which how greatly to our owne hurt we neglect, we shall shortly feele.

What it is to receiue the grace of God in vaine

Ioh. 12.35.

For he sayth: I haue heard thee in a tyme accepted, and in the day of saluation haue I succoured thee: beholde nowe the accepted tyme. He describeth here the merueilous felicitie which is there where the Gospell flourisheth, there is no wrath, no reuengement, all thinges are replenished with grace and saluation, yea it is vnspeakeable howe great felicitie these wordes doe speake of. Whereas he first sayth: a tyme accepted, it is spoken by an Hebrewe figure, and is as much as if thou say: a gratious tyme and replenished with the fauour of God, wherein God turneth away his anger, and declareth nothing but loue toward vs, and a ready will to helpe vs. Our sinnes are blotted out, not onely those that be past, but those also which as yet sticke in our flesh, and that I may speake in a word: the kingdom of mercie is present, wherein nothing but forgiuenes of sinnes, and restoring of grace is shewed: heauen standeth open, the right yeare of Jubile is come, wherein all dettes are remitted, and no grace is denied. Whereupon he sayth: In a time accepted haue I heard thee, that is, now I fauour thee & am mercifull vnto thee, what-

A time accepted.

soeuer thou wilt haue, pray for it, and thou shalt obtayne it, and certainly receiue it. Onely let not the fault be in thy selfe, pray, while this time endureth.

The day of saluation.

Beholde nowe the day of saluation. He calleth this the time and day of saluation, that is of helpe and felicitie. For we are not onely certayne hereof, that God is mercifull and fauourable vnto vs, and we acceptable vnto him, but also as we beleeue, and by faith are sure of his goodnes toward vs, so he declareth in deede, heareth them that crie vnto him, helpeth and saueth them, yea and maketh them plainly blessed. We therefore worthely acknowledge and confesse this tyme to be the wished, prosperous, happie, and very day of saluation. For it behoueth that both be together, both that God fauour vs, and also that he declare his fauour towards vs by worke or deede. That he fauoureth vs, the accepted tyme which is nowe presente doth witnes: that he doth also helpe vs and finish our saluation, this other witnesseth, to wit the day of saluation, the day of helpe. But as the state of the life of Christians is, if thou wilt iudge according to the outward man, thou wilt iudge it rather a tyme of affliction, wrath and indignation, wherein the Gospell is preached, and wherein they liue, then a time of grace and saluation. Wherefore the wordes of the spirit must be spiritually vnderstood, so shall we easily see & perceiue that these noble and most pleasaunt names doe most rightly and properly belong to the tyme wherein the Gospell flourisheth, that it is a tyme accepted, that is, full of grace, and a time of saluation, whereby surely all the riches and felicitie of Christes kingdom are notably commended and set forth vnto vs.

Let vs giue no occasion of offence in any thinge. Forasmuch therefore as there is so acceptable and gratious a tyme, let vs, sayth he, vse it worthely, and not receiue it in vayne. First endeuouring to giue no occasion of offence to any man, least that our office of preachinge Christ be reprehended, whereby he sufficiently declareth what offence he meaneth, namely, that the doctrine of the Gospell may not be stumbled at, as though he taught that which is not perfect and sound. Nowe there may be giuen a double occasion of offence, whereby the Gospell is reprehended: one, wherby the Heathen are offended, when as some vnder a pretence of ỹ Gospel seeke the libertie of the flesh, wil not be

No offence must be giuen whereby the Gospell may be reprehended.

Double occasion of offence may be giuen,

obedient

obedient to magistrates, turning the libertie of ỹ spirit, into fleshly licētiousnes. These do meruelously offend ỹ discreeter & wiser sort of the Heathen, and make that they hate the Gospell without a cause, which they thinke doth teach this licentiousnes: and so as it were with a certaine force they do by this their insolencie repell and driue them from the faith of Christ: for they measuring all Christians by these, do detest them as light men, and troublers of the common wealth, and therefore not to be suffered. This offence therefore, and this reprehension, or rather hatred and persecution of the Gospel we acknowledge to come through these prepostorous Christians. An other offence is, whereby euē Christians amōg themselues are sometime offended, through the vnreasonable vse of Christian libertie, in meates and other indifferent thinges, whereat the weaker sort in faith do sometime stumble. Whereof the Apostle hath giuen many preceptes 1. Cor. 8. Rom. 14. He exhorteth therefore here vnto that, whereof he admonisheth in other wordes 1. Cor. 10: So behaue your selues, that ye giue none offence, neither to the Iewes, nor to the Grecians, nor to the Church of God: euen as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine owne profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saued. The same he teacheth also Philip. 2. that euerie man looke not on his owne things, but on the things of other men, for so all offence should be easily taken away, nay none at all should be giuen.

whereby the Gospel is reprehended.

That our ministerie be not reprehended. Who can bring to passe that our ministerie shall not be reprehended, seeing that the Gospell is necessarily subiect to persecution, no lesse then Christ himselfe? In deede it is not in vs to make that the worde of God be not reprehended and persecuted of them which are ignorant of God, and do not beleeue: for it is a rocke of offence, Esai. 8. Rom. 9. this offence commeth because of our faith, and can not be auoided of vs, and therefore the blame thereof ought not to be layde vpon vs. Howbeit there is an other offence which proceedeth hereof, for that our loue is not sufficient dutifull, this commeth through vs, inasmuch as our workes are the cause thereof, because they do not so shine by faith, that they which are conuersaunt with vs may thereby be prouoked to serue God, as it is meete. This offence is giuen through our fault, whom it becommeth so to liue, that the Iewes, Heathen & Princes of the world

Though we cā not bring to passe that the word of God be not at all reprehended, yet must we endeuour that it be not reprehended through our fault.

might haue no occasion to say: Beholde how light and naughtie these men are, yea and verie wicked wretches, the doctrine of life which they follow must needes be euell and pestilent. So our infamie and crimes are occasion of offence to others, and of hatred and detestation of the most holy word of God. For whereas we ought so to know, preach and folow it, that thereby both our neighbours might be brought vnto God, and to the leading of a godly life, and also the glorie of God set forth, we by our naughty and slouthfull life bring to passe that it doth not onely bring no profit and commodity to our neighbours, but is brought into hatred and made detestable through our meanes, bearing our ignominie and reproche. Now it is a most horrible synne and wickednes by our naughtines to make the word of God which is most holy and bringeth saluation, to make it I say, so odious, and to repell and driue men from it, to our owne, and their most certaine destruction.

But in all thinges let vs behaue our selues as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, &c. Here he describeth in order the signes & proper tokens of a Christian life, wherewith it ought to be adorned in outward conuersation: Not meaning that one is made a Christian and godly hereby, but as he sayth, that by these as by proper frutes and signes of Christianitie, we should shew our selues to be both, and behaue our selues as the ministers of God, that is as Christians & godly men. And marke well that he sayth: as the ministers of God. It may seeme very straunge, that the ministerie of God consisteth in these, in many afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in tumults, in watchings, in fastings, &c. Among these he numbreth not Masses, and prayers for the dead, or other trifles of fained worship of God. He rehearseth those things that pertaine to the true and right seruice of God, whereby the body is chastised, and the flesh tamed. Which is well to be noted, lest that any neglect fastings, watchings and labour, and make no count of them for that they do not iustifie. They bring not righteousnes in deede, yet are they frutes of righteousnes being obtained, wherein thou mayst be exercised, and whereby thou mayst keepe thy flesh in subiection, and enforce it to do his dutie.

In tumults. He rehearseth tumults or seditions among the rest, not that it becommeth vs to teach or moue them, who ought

to

to obey Magistrates, and with quietnes to liue obedient vnto all in that which is good, as Paule teacheth Rom. 13, and Christ Matth. 22: Giue vnto Cesar those thinges that are Cesars: but that we must beare tumultes of others, as also necessities, distresses, stripes, and imprisonments, which we must cause or procure vnto none, but suffer being procured and layde vpon vs by others. Wherefore in the first place he setteth much patience, which surely moueth no sedition or tumult, but rather suffreth it, and appeaseth it, if it can. But in the meane season it singularly comforteth vs at this time, when as tumults are commonly imputed vnto vs, for that this is incident to a Christian life, that for the preaching of the Gospell it is accused to raise sedition, which it rather suffereth being raised of other against the word of God. For as in time past Achab accused the most holy Prophet Elias of sedition, affirming that it was he that troubled Israell, when as he himselfe in deede did trouble it: so is it neither a shamefull nor new thinge, for vs to be accused of the same when we preach the same word. Let vs thinke when the enemies of God lay this reproche and sclaunder vpon vs, that not onely Elias, not onely the Apostles, but Christ himselfe was counted of the Iewes a seditious felow, & crucified, a title being writtē in three languages and put on the crosse, that he should of all be counted as a seditious king of the Iewes, which would haue moued that people against Cesar, and adioined them to himselfe, who in deede by word and example of his life taught nothing more then submissiō and obediencē, and liued so that he was ready to profit and minister vnto all. As for the rest whereof the Apostle here maketh mention, as patience, affliction, necessitie, distres, stripes, prisons, labour, watchinges, fasting, puritie: it is easie to vnderstand how they pertaine to the ministerie of God, who truely disdaineth to haue slouthfull, idle, gluttonous, and drowsie ministers, and such as can not abide aduersitie and trouble. But he specially reproueth our delicate ones, which quietly enioy reuenues and rents, and take their delight and pleasure, thinking that it is an vnworthie thinge that they should labour, for they are shauen, weare long gownes, and crie out in temples &c. Howbeit these shall not be able to approue themselues before God, who will haue all to labour, and eate their owne and not other mens bread, as it is written by Paule to the Thessalonians. Who therefore

Christians commonly accused to raise sedition and tumults, whē they suffer the same being raised of other.

God will haue none to be idle, but all to labour,

and so eate their owne bread.

teacheth here also, that God is serued by labour, and not that onely, but that we also are thereby proued and commended to be the ministers of God.

In knowledge. Paule taketh knowledge here for that which we call prudence or wisedom, wherby we vse things with reason, behauing our selues with discretion and comelines. Of which knowledge ỳ saying also of Paul Rom. 10. is vnderstood: They haue the zeale of God, but not according to knowledge, that is, they beare a zeale to the lawe not prudently, not weying and cõsidering all things well, that they might do no vnderent thing. Wherefore whereas he here expresselv requireth knowledge in the ministerie of God, he thereby admonisheth vs, that we frame our life with reason, and order it prudently, in all things keeping a meane, and hauing an aduised regard of our neighbours, lest that in any thing we offende ỳ weaker sort, with vnseasonable vse of Christian libertie, and that we do all thinges to the edifying of all. So we must labour, fast, watch, and applie our selues to chastitie and such other thinges, not aboue measure, that either the body may be in daunger by too much honger and watching, or the true puritie of life by ouermuch abstinence from matrimoniall companie, but we must vse these thinges with knowledge, that is with conuenient wisedome and discretion, that they may not any whit hurt, but alwayes edifie. Whereupon Paule 1. Cor. 7. expresselv admonisheth maried folkes, that they abstaine not ouermuch from mutuall companie, lest that they be tempted of Satan. In all these therefore, in fastings, watchings, labours, chastitie &c: the Apostle would prescribe and appoint no rule, lawe or measure, which the councels of the Pope and Monkes do, but the meane or measure to be obserued in them he left free to euerie mans knowledge and discretion, that euerie one may consider with himselfe how much or long he must labour, fast, watch, or abstaine, to this ende that the flesh may be tamed and made obedient to the spirit.

Christians must frame their life prudently and with sufficiẽt discretion.

In long suffering, in kindnes, in the holy Spirit. What the two former are the Apostle hath at large sufficiently declared Rom. 2. Gal. 5. But whereas he saith: In the holy Spirit, it may be vnderstood after two sorts, either that he speaketh of ỳ holy Ghost, God himselfe, or that he meaneth by the holy spirit the true force and maner of a spirituall life, as though he would admonish in this

this maner: Beware of an hypocriticall spirit, which wilbe counted for a holy spirit through a meruelous shew and craftie counterfaiting of spirituall thinges, when it is in deede an vncleane, prophane, and an euell spirit, and bringeth in nothing but sects and heresies. But liue ye in the true & holy spirit which is giuen of God, which glueth and maintaineth vnitie, one mynde, heart and affection, whereof he speaketh also Eph. 4: Endeuour to keepe the vnitie of the spirit in the bond of peace. They therefore which perseuer in the same true faith, mynde and sentence, behaue themselues as the ministers of God in the holy spirit, being truly spirituall, and liuing a spirituall life. For a syncere spirituall life, which is led by the assistaunce of the holy spirit of God, is also led in the vnitie of myndes, the hearts by faith being affected after the same sort. A true spirituall life.

In loue vnfained, in the word of truth. As he set the holy spirit against heretikes and false Prophets, so he setteth vnfained loue against slouthfull and sluggish Christians, who albeit they haue the same meaning and mynde in the true spirituall life, as concerning opinions of doctrine, yet are they remisse, colde and faint in loue. So he setteth the word of truth against them which abuse the word of God, and interpret it according to their owne affectiõs, that thereby they may get them a name and profit. For as false spirits do contemne the word of the Scripture, and preferre themselues before it: so these do in deede boast of the word, and wilbe counted maisters of the Scripture, but by their interpretations do peruert the sense and meaning thereof. Against these Peter speaketh: If any man speake, let him speake as the wordes of God, that is, let him take heede that he be certaine that those wordes which he speaketh, be the wordes of God, and not his owne vaine imagination. Now Paule calleth that here the word of truth, which is syncere word of God, not which is vnsyncere & fained, which forasmuch as it is ours, is falsly called the word of God. For that which we call the true & right word, the Hebrewes call the word of truth. The word of truth.

In the power of God. Of this power Peter also speaketh 1. Pet. 1. If any man minister, let him do it as of the abilitie which God ministreth. And Paule Coloss. 1: Whereunto I also labour and striue, according to his working, which worketh in me mightely. Againe Rom. 15: I dare not speake of any thing which In spirituall functions & matters of saluation we must do nothing but

that which we are certain that God worketh by vs.

Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient. &c. Christians must be certaine that they are the kingdome of God, and do nothing at all, especially in spirituall functions, and those thinges that pertaine to the saluation of soules, whereof they are not certaine, that it is not they which worke, but God that worketh by them. For in the kingdome of God it is meete, that God alone do speake, commaund, do, dispose, and worke all thinges. This Christ ment wen he said Matth. 5: Let yout light so shine before men, that they may see your good workes, and glorifie your Father which is in heauen, as the author of them, which doth them and not you.

The spiritual armour of a Christian.

By the armour of righteousnes on the right hand, and on the left, by honour and dishonour, &c. This armour he describeth more at large in the Epistle to the Ephesians & Thessalonians. He rehearseth there the girdle of veritie, the brest plate of righteousnes, the shoes of preparation to preach the Gospell, the shield of faith, the [illegible]met of saluation, &c. This armour of righteousnes, he calleth in his Epistle to the Ephesians, the armour of God, both are to this ende, that he may turne Christians from corporall and prophane armour, and admonish them, that they are a spirituall people, and therefore must be furnished with spirituall armour, wherewith they must alwayes fight a spirituall fight with spirituall enemies, which here he rehearseth, and sheweth that they do assaile vs both on the right hand and on the left. On the left hand he setteth dishonour, euell report, and that we are counted as deceiuers, vnknowen, dying, chastened, sorrowing, poore, hauing nothing. For all these thinges come vnto Christians, they are openly defamed, being reproched to their face, and by infamie falsly accused and railed on, counted as deceiuers and followers of most wicked trades. They are as vnknowne although noble, all refusing to be friends with them because of the perilous confession of the name of Christ, yea it manie times commeth to passe that they that were their most familiar friends are ashamed of them, for that they haue so euell a report, and are verie ill spoken of among the chiefe, richest, wisest, and mightiest of the world. They are dying, that is, as sheepe appointed to the slaughter, they looke for death euery moment, by reason of the great hatred and enuie which the euell beare toward them, being alwayes persecuted of the chiefe of the world.

The enemies of Christians which assaile them on the left hand.

They

They are chastened, for it often times falleth out that they are striken and beaten, and do by other discommodities trie how they are enuied of the world, and how great indignation the mightie of the world beare against them. They are as sorrowing, for all outward thinges are against them, and the whole world giueth many causes of griefes vnto them. They are as poore, for there is no man of the world which will giue them any thing, euerie man is ready to hurt and endamage them. Neither do they possesse any thinge, for although all thinges be not taken from them at once, yet are they in that state that they daily looke for it. Against these aduersities & as enemies assailing vs on the left hãd, it is needfull that we be fortified & fensed with ỹ armour of God, lest that we either despeire or faint. Now this armour is a sure and inuincible faith, continuall consolation and exhortation of the word of God, and a liuely hope and vndouted expectation of the helpe of God. When being furnished with these, we suffer all thinges patiently, standing stedfast in our dutie, we declare our selues the syncere ministers of God, which the false Apostles and hypocrites can neuer do, although they faine that they serue God. The armour of God.

On the right hand he setteth glorie, praises, that we are counted true, knowne, do liue, are not killed, do reioyce, enriching many, possessing all thinges. For it alwayes falleth out, that there be some which make account of Christians, and reuerence them, among whom they are well reported of, and counted true in doctrine, wherefore some are not wanting which ioyne themselues vnto them, and do openly pretend friendship with them, freely pronouncing them to be the ministers of God. Neither do they die so oft as they are brought into daunger, and being chastened are not alwayes killed. Finally it commeth to passe by the consolation of the spirit, that they do then most of all reioyce, when they are in greatest affliction. For their heart reioyceth in God, which ioy bursteth forth, and vttereth it selfe in wordes, workes, and gestures. And albeit they be poore in corporall substaunce, yet are they neuer famished with hunger, but with the word of God do enrich verie many in spirit, & stand not in neede of any thing, although they haue nothing, for all thinges are in their handes, for that all creatures must serue the beleeuers, as Christ sayth: To him that beleeueth all thinges are possible. Where against Christiãs must be defẽded with spirituall armour on the right hand.

These things albeit they be the excellent giftes of God, notwithstanding if the feare of God should be absent, euen they should be turned into enemies vnto vs, and therefore is it needefull that we be strongly fensed against them with the armour of God, lest that they make vs waxe proud, or insolently puffe vs vp. A Christian man therefore is meruelously free, and addicted to nothing but to God alone, he setteth God onely before his eyes, he endeuoureth to come straight vnto him by the midle and hie waye, betweene those thinges which assaile on the right hand and on the left, so that he is neither throwen downe by aduersitie, nor puffed vp by prosperity, but vseth both most rightly, both to the glorie of God and profit of his neighbours. We must, sayth the Apostle, liue such a life, while it is the time of grace and of the liuely light of the Gospell, lest that while this daye shineth we worke not, and that shall haue shined vnto vs in vaine. This is the true ministerie of God which onely he alloweth, wherein he graunt that we may serue him, and that most dutifully, Amen.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, CONCERNING TENTATION.

Matth. 4.

Verse 1. THen was Iesus led aside of the spirit into the wildernes, to be tempted of the Deuell.

2. And whē he had fasted forty daies and fortie nights, he was afterward hungrie.

3. Then came to him the tempter & said, if thou be the sonne of God commaund that these stones be made bread.

4. But

4. But he aunſwering, ſaid, it is written: Man ſhall not liue by bread only, but by euerie word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.
5. Then the Deuell tooke him vp into the holy Citie, and ſet him on a pinacle of the temple,
6. And ſaid vnto him: If thou be the Sonne of God, caſt thy ſelf down: for it is written, that he will giue his Angels charge ouer thee, & with their hãds they ſhal lift thee vp, leſt at any time thou ſhouldeſt daſh thy foote againſt a ſtone.
7. Ieſus ſaid vnto him, it is written againe: Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God.
8. Again the Deuell tooke him vp into an exceeding hie mountain, & ſhewed him all the kingdomes of the world, and the glorie of them.
9. And ſaid to him: All theſe will I giue thee, if thou wilt fall downe, and worſhip me.
10. Thẽ ſaid Ieſus vnto him, Auoid Satan, for it is written: Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him onely ſhalt thou ſerue.
11. Then the Deuel left him: and behold, the Angels came, and miniſtred vnto him.

THis text hath therefore bin appointed to be redde in the beginning of the ſolemne faſt, which hath hitherto bin commaunded for fortie dayes, that the example of Chriſt being commẽded to Chriſtians, they might thereby be prouoked to keepe that faſt ſo much more religiouſly, which ſurely was nothing but a vaine trifle. Firſt, for that no mã is able to follow ẏ example of Chriſt, who liued without any meat, fortie dayes, and ſo many nights. Chriſt rather followed the example of Moſes herein, then gaue vnto vs any example to follow. Moſes receiuing the Lawe, was fortie dayes & fortie nights in the mount Sinai without meat: ſo lõg time would Chriſt alſo faſt, cõming to bring & publiſh a new law. Againe, this faſting is a peruerſe thing, inaſmuch as it was

ordained of men. For albeit Christ fasted fortie dayes, yet haue we no word of his whereby he hath commaunded vs also to do the same. He did many other thinges beside notwithstanding he will not haue vs also to do them: those thinges that he hath commaunded vs to do, those thinges, I say, we must endeuour to do, that thereby we may obey his wil. But the most pestilent thing of all herein was, that we tooke vpon vs, and vsed fasting as a good and meritorious worke, not to tame the flesh thereby, but to satisfie for synnes, and to procure the fauour of God vnto our selues. Which wicked opinion made our fasting so foule, filthie and abominable before God, that no feastings, bankets, gluttonie and dronkennes are so filthie and detestable before him, & it were better to drinke and bibbe day & night, then so to fast. And although this vngodly & wicked intent had not defiled our fasting, but that it had bin ordained for chastising ỹ body, neuertheles forasmuch as it was not left free, that euerie one might haue taken it vpon him of his owne accord, but was enforced by the lawes of man, so that most which fasted, fasted against their willes, and with a grudging mynde, it could not be but vaine and vnacceptable to God. I speake not what other hurt it did in women with child, in yong children, in the weake and aged. Wherefore we will more rightly consider this text, and see what maner of fasting it teacheth by the example of Christ.

A most wicked abuse of fasting.

Fasting must be left free.

Two sorts of fasting, w̃ are allowable & to be commended.

The Scripture commendeth vnto vs two sorts of fasting which are laudable: one, which is taken vpon vs of our owne accord, to tame the flesh, whereof the Apostle speaketh 2. Cor. 6. where he exhorteth vs to behaue our selues as the ministers of God, by labours, watchings, & fastings among the rest. An other, which in deede is not taken vpon vs willingly, yet is willingly borne of vs, when by reason of neede and pouertie we haue not whereon to feede. Whereof Paule speaketh also in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, the fourth chapter: Vnto this houre we both hunger and thirst. And Christ Matth. 9: VVhen the bridegrome shalbe taken from them, then shall they fast. This fasting Christ teacheth vs by his present example, who being alone in the desert and hauing no meat, did suffer that neede and hunger patiently. The first of these two fastes may when we please be left and broken with eating of meat: but this last must be suffred vntill the Lord ende and breake it.

Now

Now the cause why the Euangelist did so diligently first declare, that Jesus was led aside of the spirit into the wildernes, that he should there fast and be tempted, is this: lest that any taking vpon him to fast of his owne mynde and for his owne commodities sake, should in vaine endeuour to follow this example of Christ. For he must looke for the leading aspde of the spirite, he will cause fasting and tentation enough: for he that without the leading aspde of the spirit, should voluntarily bring himselfe into daunger of hunger, or any other tentation, when by the blessing of God he hath what to eate and drinke, and whereby to liue quietly, he, I saye, should plainly tempt the Lord. We must not procure to our selues pouertie and tentation, they will come soone enough of themselues, onely when they are sent of the Lord we must endeuour to beare them patiently. Iesus, as the Euangelist writeth, was led aside of the spirite into the wildernes, he did not choose to himselfe the wildernes. They are led with the Spirite of God, which are the sonnes of God, Romans 8. The good thinges which the Lorde giueth, he giueth for this, that we maye enioye them with thankes giuing, not that we should neglect them, tempting him.

We must not procure tentation to our selues, but patiently suffer it, when it pleaseth ỹ Lord to send it.

Moreouer, this history is written vnto vs both to instruct, and also to exhort. To instruct, that we may learne hereby, that Christ by this his fasting, hunger, tentation and victorie against Satan did serue vs, & furthered our saluation: that whosoeuer beleeueth in him, may neuer neede, or be hurt by any tentation, but rather shall abound with good thinges in the middes of pouertie, and be safe in the middes of tentation, for that his head and Lord Christ hath ouercome all these thinges for him, whereof by fayth he is most certain, according as ỹ Lord himselfe sayth Joh. 16: Be ye of good comfort, I haue ouercome the world. And if God could without meat nourish his Christ fortie dayes & so many nights, so he can also Christians. We are exhorted also here, that according to this example of Christ, we suffer hunger, tentation, and other necessities whē they come, and when the case so requireth, to the glorie of God & profit of our neighbours. And surely if we do earnestly confesse and sticke to the word of God, these thinges will vndoutedly come vnto vs. The present text therefore containeth a meruelous consolation and strengthening of faith, against

The history of Christes tentation cōtaineth both instruction & exhortation.

the filthie and incredulous bellie, which being diligētly and faithfullp weyed, our conscience shalbe verie much comforted and strēgthened, that we may not be carefull for liuing, but trust with a full confidence, that God will giue vs plentifully those thinges that be necessarie. Now, that this tentation also is incident vnto vs it is manifest. For as Christ was led aside into the wildernes, that is, was left alone of God, Angels, men, and all creatures, which might helpe him: so also falleth it out with vs. We are led aside into the wildernes, we are forsaken and left alone. And this in deede is it, which especially grieueth vs, to feele or perceiue nothing whereunto we may trust, or from whence we may looke for helpe. As when it lyeth vpon me to prepare sustenance for me and mine, and I haue nothing at all of my selfe, neither perceiue any helpe comming from any man, neither know where to looke for any. This is to be led aside into the desert, and to be left alone, I being in this case, am in the true exercise of faith, then I learne how I my selfe am nothing, howe weake my faith is, how great and rare a thing sounde faith is, and howe deepe abominable incredulitie is setled in the harts of all. But he that hath as yet a purse beauie with money, a seller ful of wine, a garnar replenished with graine, he is not yet led aside into the wildernes, or left alone, and therefore can not feele tentation while these thinges remaine.

How we are sometime led aside into ỹ wildernes.

Secondly, Satan commeth, and tempteth Christ with this care for the bellie, and diffidence of the goodnes of God, saying: If thou be the Sonne of God, commaund that these stones be made bread. As if he should say according to ỹ Dutch prouerbe: Trust in God, and in the meane season neglect to bake bread. Tarie till a rosted chicken flie into thy mouth. Go now, and say that thou hast a God, who is carefull for thee. Where is now that thy heauenly Father, who hath so great a care of thee? Hath he not goodlily forsaken thee? Eate now and drinke of thy faith, and let vs see how thou shalbe suffised: it were well with thee, if thou couldest feede on stones. What a goodly sonne of God art thou? How fatherly doth he behaue himselfe toward thee? He sendeth thee not so much as a peece of breade, but suffreth thee here to be pined with hunger. Go now, and beleeue yet that thou art the sonne of God, and he thy Father. Surely with these and such like cogitations he tempteth all the children of God, which

Satan tempteth Christ with care for the belly and diffidence of Gods goodnes.

Christ

Christ also vndoutedly felt, for he was not a blocke or stone, but verie man, although pure from synne, as he also continued, which is not giuen vnto vs. Now that the Deuel tempted Christ with care of the bellie, diffidence and wicked desire, the aunswere of Christ doth sufficiently declare: Man liueth not by breade alone. Which is as much as if he had said: Thou wilt haue me haue regard to bread alone, thou dealest with me, as though I ought to haue no other care but of meate and foode for the bellie. This tentation is verie common, euen among men that are of the most perfect sort, but they especially feele it, which when they are poore, haue notwithstanding a wife and children to nourish and maintaine, and therewithall an emptie house. Herevpon Paule calleth couetousnes the roote of all euels, for that it is the right offspring of diffidence. And what thinge els, but this diffidence and care of the bellie, is the cause that many are so loath to marie? what els doth hold so many thousand men in whoredom & vnchast liuing, and detaineth them from matrimonie, but this immoderate care of the bellie, and vngodly feare lest they should be pined and perish with hunger? But the present deede and example of Christ should be thought vpon, who although he had bin without meate fortie dayes and so many nights, yet was he not quite forsaken and left destitute, but the Angels at the last came, and ministred all thinges necessarie vnto him.

An vsuall thinge to be tẽpted with care for the belly.

Thirdly, we may see here how Christ meeteth with this tentation of the bellie, and ouercometh it. He seeth nothing in deede but stones and that which can not be eaten, therefore from those thinges that were before his eyes he remoueth his minde to the worde of God, thereby both strengthening himselfe, and ouerthrowing the Deuell. On which word Christians, especially when pouertie presseth them, and all thinges seeme to be turned into stones, and the minde doth now tremble for feare of hunger, ought with a strong faith to lay hold, and aunswere the tentation that would quite discourage thē: What if the whole world were full of bread? yet doth not man liue by bread alone, there is neede of an other thinge, that is, of the word of God. Now forasmuch as these wordes are of meruelous force and efficacie, we must a litle stand vpon them, and endeuour to declare them, & not lightly passe them ouer. These wordes therefore Christ tooke out of

How Christians when they are tempted with pouerty and neede must comfort thẽselues, and ouercome ỹ tentation.

the first booke of Moses chap. 8. where Moses speaketh thus vn-
Deut. 8. 3. to the Israelites: The Lord thy God humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with Manna, which neither thou nor thy fathers knew of, to make thee know that a man doth not liue by bread onely, but by euerie word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord. Which is as much as if he had said: Whereas he suffered thee to hunger, and yet thou didst not perish, thou mayst thereby easily know, that it is God which sustaineth thee by his word euen without bread. For if we did liue and were nourished by bread alone, it were necessarie that we should be alwayes filled with bread. But it is the word of God that nourisheth vs, which he will haue preached, that we may knowe that he is our God, and that he will shew himselfe bountifull and gracious vnto vs. We are taught therefore by this aunswere of Christ, and testimonie of Moses, that he which beleeueth in the word of God, shall vndoutedly haue experience of two thinges. First, that when meate is wanting, and he is pinched with hunger, he is as well sustained and strengthened by this word, that he die not or perish with hunger, as if he might abundantly enioye meate, this word of God, which he obtaineth in heart, nourishing and strengthening him without meat and drinke. And if he haue but a litle meat, he shall perceiue that litle, although it were but euen one peece of breade, to feede and nourish him no lesse, then if he did enioy princely fare. For not by bread, but by the word of God the body is nourished and preserued, like as by it it was made, as also all other thinges, like as by the word they were created, so also by it are they preserued. The other thing, which we are here taught that the beleeuer shall haue experience of, is, that at the length he shall assuredly receiue bread, from whence so euer it come, yea although it should raine downe from heauen, as Manna did to the Israelites, in a place where no other breade could be gotten. Let a Christian quietly promise to himselfe and looke for these two thinges, his hope can not be frustrate, either he shall haue in hunger somewhat to eate, from whence soeuer it be giuen him, or his hunger shalbe made so tolerable vnto him, that he shalbe no lesse fedde, then if he were fedde with breade, the power of the word of God nourishing and sustaining him. Those thinges that I haue said of bread that is, of meat, are also to be vnderstood of drinke, apparell, house,

He that beleueth in the word of God shall both be sustained in the time of hunger, and at the last assuredly haue foode sufficient.

house, and all thinges necessarie vnto this life.

It may be in deede that a godly man do neede apparell, or an house, &c. but at length he shall haue them. The leaues falling from the trees shall sooner be turned into coats and clokes, then we can be left naked, or surely those garments which we haue shall not wax olde, which the Israelites tried, whose clothes and shoes in the desert were not worne, as also a most wide wildernes was vnto them in steede of houses, places vnpassable, passable, vnwaterie, waterie, finally the stonie rockes, fountaines of water. For the Word of God standeth sure and vnmoueable: The Lord is carefull for vs. And Paule sayth: God giueth vs aboundantly all thinges to enioye. Also Christ sayth Matth. 6: Seeke first the kingdome of God, and all thinges shalbe ministred vnto you, onely be carefull for nothing. Such wordes and promises of God must needes remaine true for euer, and therefore no good thinge can be wanting to them that beleeue. This euen daily experience may teach vs. We see commonly poore folkes and their children to be better liking thē many rich folkes and their children, for that the vse of their small sustenaunce is by the blessing of God encreased, and doth much more feede and nourish them, then all that most aboundant substaunce doth feede and nourish the rich. Now, whereas the wicked do sometime suffer neede, or in the time of famine some do euen die through hunger, that is the speciall vengeance of God, as is also the pestilence, warre and such like. Otherwise it plainly appeareth, that not meat but God doth feede and sustaine vs.

Singular comfort against pouertie and neede.

1. Pet. 5. 7.
1. Tim. 6. 17.

Howbeit whereas God feedeth the world with bread, and not with his word alone without bread, he therefore doth it, that he may so hide his worke, and exercise our faith. So he commaunded the Israelites, that they should prepare themselues to battaile, and yet he would not haue the victorie to be gotten by their sword and labour: but he himselfe would by meanes of their sword and labour ouercome and vanquithe the enemies. Here also it might be said, that the souldier doth slaie and ouercome the enemie, not by his sword alone, but by the word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Whereupō David sayth Psal. 44: I will not trust in my bow, it is not my sword that can saue me. And againe, He is not delighted in any mans legges: a man of great might is not deliuered by much strength: a horse is but a

It pleaseth God to work by ordinarie meanes, yet of no necessitie.

Psal. 147. 10.

vaine thing to saue a man, &c. Neuertheles God vseth men, swordes, horses, and bowes, howbeit not by the power and strength of them, but by them as by certaine meanes or instruments, he himselfe fighteth & ouercometh. This he hath sufficiently declared oftentimes, when he hath ouerthrowen the enemies, and deliuered his people, which surely he daily doth, when the case so requireth. After the same sort God vseth bread also, by it, forasmuch as it is made for that vse, he feedeth vs, howbeit when it is wanting, he neuertheles feedeth them that be his, euen by his word, without bread, as he doth at other times by bread, so that bread doth as it were worke vnder God, as the Apostles and preachers of the word in spirituall and euangelicall meat serue vnder him, as it is mentioned 1. Cor. 3. For as God vseth their ministerie to teache men, he himselfe by his spirit speaking in their hearts through it, and doing all thinges alone, which he both is able to do, and often times wont to do without the ministerie of the preachers of his word, although he will not in the meane season haue the ministerie of his to be despised, and so himselfe tempted: so to the nourishing of our outward man, he outwardly vseth bread, although he doth make by his word inwardly, that we be nourished and strengthened, which he can as well do, and is wont to do when bread is awaye, that all our nourishment may be attributed to the word, and not to bread, which he vseth as an instrument, but yet of no necessitie. That I may speake briefly, all creatures do as it were serue vnder him, and are his instruments, without which notwithstanding he is able, and often times wont to worke: by this meanes prouiding, that we may depend on his word alone, neither trusting more vnto him, when we haue breade and other thinges which our life vseth, neither lesse when we want them, but may vse them with giuing of thankes when he bestoweth them vpon vs, when otherwise, may patiently be without them, being certain neuertheles, that we shall liue and be nourished in both times, both when we haue them, and when we haue them not. And by this faith that vain and vngodly care of the bellie, greedie desire of thinges, and carefulnes of life are ouercome.

A similitude.

Tentation whereby we are moued to

Then the Deuell tooke him vp into the holie Citie, &c. This tentation is quite contrarie to the former. He assaileth vs with such tentation also whereby he goeth about to moue vs to tempt God,

God, euen as he willeth Christ to cast him self downe from a pinnacle of the temple, and so tempt God, when there were ladders, by which he might descend. And that this tentation prouoketh to tempt God, it is manifest euen by the aunswere of Christ, who aunswereth Satan in this maner: It is written: Thou shalt not tempt the Lorde thy God. Hereby he signifieth that the deuill would prouoke him to tempt God. Now this tentation doth not amis follow the former. For when the deuil perceiueth the hart, that in pouertie and necessitie it trusteth in God, he byandby maketh an end of tempting by care of the bellie and desire of things, as being weaker then that by it he may ouerthrow one so stronge in faith. He thinketh therefore with him selfe: If he professe him selfe to be of so religious and assured a minde, I will on this side also giue occasion to sinne. And so he setteth vpon him on the right side, affirming that that is to be beleeued, which the Lorde hath neither spoken, nor commaunded to be beleeued. As is this: If he should bring thee to such madnes, that whē thou hast bread at home giuen thee of God, as he of his goodnes giueth vnto vs euery day, thou wouldest not vse it, but wouldest procure to thy selfe necessitie and hunger, saying: I must trust in God, I wil not feede on this earthly bread, I will tarye till God giue me other from heauen. This were to tempt God. For he doth not commaund thee to beleeue, that that thing shal come vnto thee wherof thou hast neede, if it be already come of his liberalitie. For why shouldest thou beleeue that he will giue that, which thou hast already of his gift? Thou seest therefore that the deuill doth here obiect a certaine necessitie and neede vnto Christ, where there is none. For there was a sufficient meane to descende from the pinnacle of the temple, neither was it reason to attempt this newe vnaccustomed and vnnecessary meane whereunto Satan persuaded.

tempt God with presuptuous confidence.

Moreouer allegorically we may by this doing of Satan perceiue his craft and suttletie. He tooke Iesus, sayth the Euangelist, into the holy Citie, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple. By this tentation he repleniseth men with cogitations that seeme most holy, that they may thinke them selues most plentifully endued with faith, and to stande in a very holy place, when as notwithstanding they are sette not in the temple, but on the temple, that is, not in the synceritie of sayth, but in a vayne

Satan temptēth men vnto hypocriticall holines.

outward shew of faith. Neuertheles he is in the meane season in ỹ holy ritie, because that this kind of men is wont to be no where but among Christians, where the word of the Lord and the preaching of faith is daily heard, who also like vnto Satan, haue sentences of Scripture in a readines as concerning the wordes, although they alwayes peruert & wrest them to their owne errour and false imaginations. So Satan recited here vnto Christ out of the 91 Psalme, that God doth commaund his Angels concerning his children, that they keepe them, lifting them vp with their hands. But the deceiuer concealed that which is added, that is, in their wayes. For thus hath the Psalme: He will giue his Angells charge ouer thee, to keepe thee in all thy wayes, &c. So that the custodie of Angells is not by the commaundement promised vnto vs, vnles we walke in our wayes which he hath prescribed vs. If we walke in them, we shal assuredly be kept of Angells. Howbeit the deuill sayth nothing of the wayes of ỹ Lord, but promiseth by corrupting the saying of the Psalme, that it is commaunded to the Angells, to keepe vs in what wayes soeuer, wherof the Lorde hath commaunded nothing. And this is Satans seducing, and persuasion to tempt God.

Psal. 91. 11.

But this tentation doth not easily happen in these outward thinges, as are bread, apparell, houses, &c. Thou mayst finde in deed some rash heads, which for no cause do put their life, goods, good name in great daunger, as they doe which goe on warfare of their owne accord, which leape rashly into most deepe waters, or goe voluntarily into other no small daungers. Of whom Iesus the sonne of Syrach sayth: He that loueth perill, shall perish in it. Whereof the Germanes haue a prouerbe: Selfe do, self haue: what euery one followeth, that he commeth vnto. So is it almost vsuall, that none are oftner drowned then they that are most exercised in swimming, and none fal more perilously, then they which vse to attempt hie matters. But he shall be hardly founde, which hauing a false and ouermuch confidence in God, attempteth any such thing, or vseth not the thinges present, as bread, apparell, house, and such like, loking with perill, while God prouide otherwise for him by miracle. We read of a certaine Heremite, who because he had vowed to take bread of no men, brought him selfe into perill by hunger, and so perished, and vndoutedly went strait vnto hell, because of that false faith and tempting of God, which he

Eccle. 3. 27.

We are seldō brought to tēpt God by not taking the vse of outward things which he hath giuen vs.

he learned no other where but of ꝑ deuill, so that his madnes was altogither like that, whereunto Satan here persuadeth Christ, to wit, that he shoulde cast him selfe downe from a pinnacle of the temple. Howbeit thou shalt finde very few which doe follow this Heremite, and doe differre to enioy corporall thinges present for that they hope that God will giue them other from heauen.

But in spirituall things, which concerne the nourishment, not of the body, but of ꝑ soule, this tentation is wont to be both mighty and often. In these God hath appoynted a certayne maner, wherby the soule may be fedde, nourished and strengthened, both most commodiously, and also most blessedly, so that no good thing at all can be wanting vnto it. This nourishment, this strength, this saluation, is Christ our Sauiour, in whom the Father hath most abundantly offered and giuen all good thinges. But there are very few which desire him, the moste parte seeke some other where, whereby their soules may liue, & obtaine saluation. Such are all they which seeke saluation by their workes. These are they whom Satan hauing sette on a pinnacle of the temple, biddeth them cast them selues downe, and they obey him. They descende where as is no way: that is, they beleeue and trust in God, yet so, as they trust also in their owne workes, in which is no place at all for faith and trust, no way or path vnto God, wherefore throwing them selues downe headlong, they breake their necke, falling into vtter desperation.

We are easily and often by the tentation of Satan brought to refuse the true spiritual foode of our soules, and to seeke other contrary to the will and word of God

Now Satan persuadeth miserable men vnto this madnes, as also he persuaded Christ to cast him selfe downe from a pinnacle of the temple, by places of Scripture peruerted and misapplied, wherein workes are commaunded, whereby he maketh them beleeue, that the Angells shall keepe them, that is, that they shall be approued of God, when as in deede they can by nothing so offend him, as by that madde trust and confidence in workes. For they acknowledge not, ꝑ the Scripture doth no where require workes without faith, or that it doth euery where require a sound & liuely faith from which workes proceede. We haue at large declared who are such, namely, incredulous hypocrites, which are giuen to workes without faith, which falsely boast of the name of Christians, chalenging to them selues to be chiefe in ꝑ flock of Christ: For this tentation must be in the holy citie. Now these two tentations, and the causes of them doe greatly differ: In the former

the cause why men doe not beleeue is neede and hunger, for they are thereby moued to distrust God, and despeire of his goodnes. In the latter the cause why they doe not beleeue is ouermuch abundance, for that miserable men are full of most plentifull and abundant treasure, so that they loath it, coueting to haue some other speciall thinge, whereby they may procure the saluation of their soules. So our case standeth ill in both respects: If we haue nothinge we despeire, and distrust God: If we haue plentie of thinges, we loath them, and require other, being then also voyde of faith. Concerning the first, we flie and hate scarsitie and seeke plentie: concerning the latter, we seeke scarsitie, and flie plentie. Howsoeuer God dealeth with vs, we are not content: our incredulitie is a bottomles pit of malice and vngodlines.

Tentation by vaine glory, pleasures and delights of the world.

Againe the deuil tooke him vp into an exceeding high moũtaine. Here he tempteth with vaine glorie & power of the world, as by the wordes of the deuil doth plainly appeare, who shewing Christ ỹ kingdoms of the world, offered them to him, if he would worship him. By this tentation they are ouercome which reuolt from faith, that they may enioy glorie and power here, or at least doe so temper their faith that they lose not these thinges. In the number of these are all heretikes and troublers of the Church, which do therfore either leaue, or oppugne the sinceritie of faith, that being exempted out of the common number they may be extolled on hie. So we may place this tentation on the right hand, as the first assaileth vs on the left. For as the first tentation is of aduersitie, whereby we are moued to indignation, impatiencie, & diffidence, so this third tentation is of prosperitie, whereby we are prouoked to delights, glory, pleasures, and whatsoeuer is excellent and delectable in the world. The second tentation is altogither spirituall, whereby Satan by deceit, and meruelous & secret suttletie goeth about to withdraw man from faith. For whom he can not ouercome with pouertie, scarsitie, necessitie, & misery, them he tẽpteth with riches, fauour, glorie, delights, power, &c: & so he assayleth vs on either side, yea when he preuaileth by neither way, he goeth about, as Peter saith, & attẽpteth all meanes, that whom he can ouercome neither by aduersitie, that is, by the first tentation, nor by prosperitie, that is, by the thirde tentation, he may ouercome either by errour, blindnes, or false vnderstanding of the Scripture, that is, by the second tentation which is spirituall,

spirituall, and therefore most hurtfull. By which if he preuaile against any, they are also ouercome both on the left side and on the right. For whether they suffer such pouertie, or enioy plenty of thinges, whether they contend, or decide vnto all thinges, both is nothing: while they are in errour, either patience in aduersitie or constancie in prosperitie can be of no importance. For in both euen heretikes often tymes doe notably excell, and it is a practize of the deuill eftsoones to fayne him selfe ouercome in the first and third tentation, that he may reigne victour by the second. He can be content that they that be his doe often tymes suffer pouertie patiently, and doe also contemne the world, although they do neither of both with a simple hart, and sincere faith. Euery one therfore of these three tentations is grieuous and very hard, but the middle one is most perilous of all, for it assayleth the doctrine of faith, and is spirituall, and wont to deceiue in spirituall thinges. The other two also doe assaple faith, howebeit in these outward thinges, as aduersitie & prosperitie, although they doe also vrge vs very sore. For it can not be a litle grieuous to suffer pouerty, to want bread, and such other thinges necessary. Agayne it is no lesse grieuous to neglect, & wholy to denye fauour, glory, riches, friendes, companions, and other commodities which we haue. But an entire and sound faith in the worde of God can performe both notably, and if it be a strong faith, they seeme very easie and delectable vnto it.

An entire & sound faith can both patiently beare aduersitie, & contemne the vaine glory & delights of the world

We can not certainly know ỹ order of these tentations which happened to Christ, for that the Euangelists haue not described them after one order. For Luke hath set that last, which Matthew hath set in the middes, & that which Matthew hath set last, Luke hath placed in the middes. But there doth not so much consist in the order. Notwithstanding when any wil teach the people concerning these tentations, it were better to follow the order of Luke. For he may fitly say, and thus rehearse, that Satan doth first tempt vs with pouertie and aduersitie, wherby if he preuaile not, that he tempteth vs with prosperity and glory, which if he do in vaine, that he assaileth vs with all his might, and tempteth vs with errour, lyes, delusion, and other spiritual suttleties. Yet neither is this order alwayes obserued of Satan: but he tempteth Christians sometime with the first, sometime with the third tentation, as he hath and seeth occasion. Matthew was not careful to

rehearse them in that order, which they haue almost by their own nature, and which may be commodious for him that shall teach of them. Yea it may be that they happened not vnto Christ by any certain order, but that he was assailed of Satan one day with this, an other day with that, during the space of those forty daies, as Satan thought it most conuenient and meete for his purpose.

And behold, the Angells came, & ministred vnto him. This I thinke was done corporally, that they hauing taken bodies, appeared, and ministred vnto him meate and drinke, as his seruiters at the table, and Ministers of all other thinges necessary for his life. Yea and I thinke that the deuill also appeared vnto him in a corporall forme, perhaps as an Angell. For in that he tooke Christ, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple: also whereas in a moment he shewed him all the kingdoms of the world, he sufficiently declared, that he was more then a man, & such a one surely he shewed him selfe openly, when he offered that he would giue vnto him those kingdoms, and required that he would worship him. And vndoutedly he did not appeare like a deuill when he did these thinges, for he loueth to appeare after a fayre sort, especially when he will lie and deceiue: for then he transformeth him selfe into an Angell of light, as Paule witnesseth. Now this is written chiefly for our consolation, that we may not dout, that many Angells shall minister vnto vs, when one deuill tempteth vs, if we fight valiantly. For if we stand fast in faith, it is so farre of that God will suffer vs to be troubled and pinched with powertie, more then is meete, that he will sooner send his Angells to minister vnto vs, to be our Butlers, our Cookes, and to helpe vs with their ministerie in all necessitie. Neither are these thinges written for Christes cause, whome they can not profit, but they are written for vs, that we may learne to beleeue, that if the Angells ministred vnto him, they shall also when the case so requireth minister vnto vs his brethren and members. The Lord giue vs faith to beleeue this.

1. Cor. 11. 14.

In the time of tentation we must nothing dout of Gods help and deliuerance.

A

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, CONCERNING THE LEADING OF A GODLY LIFE.

Epheſ. 5.

Verſe 1. BE ye therfore followers of God as deare children.

2. And walke in loue, euen as Chriſt hath loued vs, and hath giuen him ſelfe for vs, to be an offering & a ſacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling ſauour to God.

3. But fornication, & all vncleannes, or couetouſnes, let it not be once named among you, as it becommeth Saincte s.

4. Neither filthines, neither fooliſh talking, neither ieſting, which are things not comely, but rather giuing of thankes.

5. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, neyther vncleane perſon, nor couetous perſon, which is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Chriſt, and of God.

6. Let no man deceiue you with vaine words: for, for ſuch thinges commeth the wrath of God vpon the children of diſobedience.

7. Be not therefore companions with them.

8. For ye were once darkenes, but are now light in the Lord: walke as children of light.

9. For the frute of the Spirit is in all goodnes, and righteouſnes, and truth.

THis text is exhortatorie, wherein Paule, according to his maner, and accustomed care for the brethren, exhorteth Christians not to leaue or slack the study and care of godlines, and giue them selues to slothfulnes, but to declare by their worke the word that they haue learned of him, that is, to shew it forth by the frutes of faith, and make it plausible and honorable, to the edifying of the Heathen, lest that by ỹ vices of them which professe the doctrine of the Gospell, they take occasion to hate that doctrine, and so be offended by them, whom it did behoue to winne them vnto Christ.

Be ye therfore followers of God as deare children. First therfore he exhorteth vs, forasmuch as we are by Christ made the sonnes of God, to imitate such a father, as deare children. Meruelous gently & alluringly he speaketh vnto vs, calling vs deare children, that by the loue of God our father toward vs, he may prouoke vs to loue him again, and them whom he commaundeth vs to loue, euen as he hath loued vs first. But howe hath he loued vs? Surely not after that common sort alone, wherby in this life he nourisheth and sustaineth vs being vnworthy, togither with al the vngodly, making his sunne to arise on the good, and on the euil, and sending rayne on the iust and vniust: wherof Christ speaketh Matth. 5: Be ye perfect as your Father is perfect. But he loueth vs also after an other speciall maner, in that he hath giuen his sonne for vs. Joh. 3. For he hath aboundantly bestowed vpon vs all temporall and also eternall good things, yea his owne self, and hath as it were poured him selfe, with all that he is, hath, and can, into vs who were sinners, vnworthy, enemies, and seruaunts of Satan, so that he could not doe and giue vnto vs more & greater thinges. Now he, whom this diuine fire of loue, which filleth heauen and earth, and yet is not comprehended, doth not kindle & inflame to loue likewise his neighbour, whosoeuer he be, friend, or enemy, he I say, wil neither by law, precepts, doctrine, threatnings and force be euer moued to godlines & loue. VValke, sayth the Apostle, in loue, whereby he signifieth that our life should be nothing els, but meere loue. Howbeit he will not haue vs walke in the loue of the world, which in loue seeketh those things which are his owne, and loueth so long as there is any thing, wherby it looketh for commoditie and lucre. Therefore he sayth: Euen as Christ hath loued vs, who neither sought nor could looke for any profit

The loue of God toward vs.

In what kind of loue we must walke.

profit or commoditie of vs, and yet he loued vs so greatly that he gaue him selfe for vs, and not onely his other good things which he giueth vs daily, and he so gaue him selfe for vs, that he might be an oblation and sacrifice, to obtayne the good will and fauour of the father toward vs, and to bring to passe, that we might now haue God a mercifull and fauourable father, being become his true children and heires, &c. So also it behoueth vs to giue and lend, not onely to our friendes, but also to our enemies, neither to count this sufficient, but to be ready also euen to dye both for friendes and foes, thinking nothing else, but that we may serue and profit our neighbours both in body and goods, as long as we shall be in the pilgrimage of this life, seeing that we possesse all thinges being giuen vnto vs by Christ.

To be an offering and a sacrifice of a sweete smelling sauour to God. This maner of speech Paul borowed out of the olo Testament, wherein those corporall sacrifices are written eftsoones to haue yeelded to the Lorde a sweete sauour, that is, to haue bene acceptable vnto him. Notwithstanding that was not because of the worke and sacrifice in it selfe, as the Iewes falsely thought, & therefore were very often reproued of the Prophets, but for Christes sake who was to come, the one and onely sacrifice of a good sauour, whom all those sacrifices of the lawe did shadow forth, and represent. Wherefore that which Paule here sayth, is as much as if he had sayd: All the sacrifices of the olde Testament haue an ende, they can nowe be of no price: Christ him selfe is the onely sacrifice, which yeeldeth vnto God a sweete smelling sauour, that is, is pleasing and acceptable vnto him, whereby we are assured that we are acceptable vnto God, and do please him. Wherefore there is no other sacrifice in the Church which may be offered for vs, beside this onely sacrifice, which being once offered hath at once satisfied for the sinnes of all the elect. And although we after the example of this sacrifice, doe offer our bodies to God, as Paule teacheth Rom. 12, yet we offer them not either for our selues or for other, forasmuch as that is proper to Christ, the onely sacrifice, whereby the saluation of all is obtayned. Wherefore those thinges smell moste stinkingly before God, whatsoeuer men offer with this mind, as though they would satisfie for their own sinnes, or for the sinnes of other, whereof we both haue and will elsewhere speake more.

The sacrifices of the olde Testament accepted for Christes sake, who was to come.

Christ the onely sacrifice which God accepteth, & wher by we are acceptable vnto him.

But fornication, and all vncleannes, or couetousnes, let it not
Vncleannes. be once named among you. By ỹ name of vncleannes beside fornication he vnderstandeth all lust & lecherous filthines, which is committed out of matrimonie, which for the filthines of them he doth not vouchsafe to rehearse by name, as Rom. 1. he speaketh very grossely of them. Although in matrimonie also a meane may be exceeded, & it is the dutie of Christians so to moderate the vse of mariage, that they require & performe due loue & beneuolēce only for auoiding fornication, but we are fallen so farre, that they are most rare, which come togither onely for procreation of children and to auoid fornication, which surely were best, and should very well become vs. Nowe the Apostle sayth, let it not be once named among you, that is, be so farre from these euils, that they
There is often falling among Christiās through infirmitie, & how true Christians deale in this case.
may not so much as be spoken of of you. Albeit it will neuer come to passe in this exile, that none among Christians be weake, & do not oftentimes fall, yet true Christians will neuer winke at those things: they will reproue, amend, put away, couer, & cure whatsoeuer such thing shal burst forth amongst them, that the heathen may not be offended and say: See what vices the Christians suffer among them selues, howe vncleane and lewde a life doe they leade & thinking that all their whole life is defiled with like vices as is their owne. We must needes confesse that among Christians some doe ofttoones fal, which we must needes beare, it is wel if onely the better part liueth well, & winketh not at their sinnes, neither teacheth them, but rather reproueth and amendeth them. So Paule exhorteth Gal. 6. that they which are spirituall wil restore them that offend, with the spirit of meekenes. And he sharply reproueth the Corinthians, for that they did lightly passe ouer many sinnes of certaine persons. For sinne being reprehended & punished, is now counted as no sinne, neither can the Church be blamed because of it. After the same sort heede must be taken, that couetousnes be not named among Christians, that is, that they become not infamous by the name thereof, which they shal bring to passe, if, when it chaūceth that couetous mē be amongst them, or one vseth deceit toward an other in their busines and affaires, or some contend in iudgement for those outward things, if I say, they doe not winke hereat, but do reproue & correct such, that the sinceritie of the doctrine of the Gospell may obtaine due estimation among the people, & there may be no cause openly to dispraise

our

our ministerie, 2. Cor. 6. These things I haue spoken because of them, who as soone as they see that all thinges do not resemble & shew forth a holines among Christians, & that some doe stumble & fall, do thinke that there is no Christian left, that the Gospel is to no purpose, & that all things are taught and done in vaine. As though the life of Christians were nowe without fight, victorie & due triumph ouer sinne being obtained, whē as rather it is a warfare and a continuall fight. Whereas therefore they do now fight and are in the campe, it is no meruell if some flie away, if some be wounded, if some fal, yea & be euen slaine outright. Warre is not made without perill and hurt, if it be earnest warre.

As it becommeth Saincts. This he addeth to his exhortation, as a reason & cause shewing why it lieth vpon Christians, to take heede that they be not diffamed by these names: For they are Saincts, now it becommeth such to be chast, bountiful, & ready to giue, to teach and doe the same. Thou seest here, that Paul calleth Christians Saincts, while they remain yet in this life, & are pressed with flesh & blood, from which nothing cōmeth but sinne, which he doth vndoutedly not for their good workes, but because of ỳ sanctifying bloode of Christ, as he witnesseth 1. Cor 6: But ye are washed, but ye are sāctified, but ye are iustified in the name of the Lord Iesus, & by the Spirit of our God. Forasmuch therefore as we are Saincts, it is meete ỳ we should shew ỳ same in our workes, & albeit we be as yet weake, neuertheles we must daily endeuour to liue purely, & farre frō couetousnes, to ỳ praise & glory of God, & ỳ edifying of our neighbours, euen ỳ heathen. Christians are Saincts, & therefore must be pure, not defiled with vncleannes, couetousnes, &c.

Neither filthines. All vnchast & lewd words of bauderie, vncleannes, & lecherous matters, he calleth filthines, of which wordes aboundance is wont to be poured forth in Innes & victailing houses, in the time of eating, drinking, & playing. These the Grecians vsed very freely and accustomably more then others, as their owne Poets & other writers do sufficiently witnes. But he especially reproueth here those lewde and wanton wordes, which are spoken openly without shame, which stirre vp wicked and vnchast thoughts, and are cause of many offences, especially being spoken amonge youth, according to that saying: Euill speakings corrupt good manners, as the Apostle writeth to the Corinthians. And if any Christians should be so careles of their tongue, that such wordes should come from them, such must be chastised Lewd, vncleane and bawdy talke forbidden. 1. Cor. 15. 33.

of the Church, and if they doe not amend, they must not be suffered, lest because of them the whole Church be ill reported of, as though these things were either taught among Christians, or suffered to be unpunished, as it is wont to be among the Heathen.

Foolish talking prohibited.

Neither foolish talking. Fables and other trifling speeches & iests are called foolish talking, which ỳ Grecians also were wont to use more then other nations, being very witty to inuent such vaine speeches. Of this sort are those tales, which our women & maidens are wont to tell, spinning at the distaffe, also the termes and verses of iuglers and such like fellowes, and many common songes, which are partly euen filthy, & partly containe other trifling and vaine things. But especially it is vnseemely and vnconuenient for Christians to vse such foolish and trifling talke, when they come together to heare the word of God, or to read and serch the Scriptures, and yet notwithstanding almost euen such folly happeneth among them, whē many come togither. For albeit they begin with serious matters, neuertheles they are meruelous easily brought vnto trifles: from earnest and holy matters, to ridiculous and vaine speeches, wherewith both the time is spent in vaine, and better things are neglected. So haue they bene wont certaine yeares hitherto, at euery feast of Easter in the tyme of preaching to tel some ridiculous tale to stirre vp the people from sleepe. They did not vnlike at the feast of the natiuitie of Christ, sing songes or carrolls, wherein they sayd, they made discourses of the birth and infancie of Iesus, howbeit ridiculous meeter and wordes, mouing rather laughter then deuotion as they called it: Also they soong many fained fables of the wise men, whom they made 3. Kings, of ỳ passion of ỳ Lord, of the punishmēt of Dorothea, & many other, all which were nothing but foolish talking & vain inuēctions, altogither vnworthy of Christians. To the nūber of these I might well adde those histories of Saincts, which they call the legends, and that flood of lies, of miracles and pilgrimages to images, and monuments of Saincts, Halles, and worshippings of Saincts, indulgences and innumerable other, not so much foolish as vngodly inuentions, which in the assemblies of the Church, were wont to be chiefly extolled in the pulpit, which were so contrary to godlines, that they deserue much rather to be called the wicked inuēctions of Satan, then foolish imaginations of mē. For they did not as ridiculous lies are wont to do, corrupt

good

good maners onely, of which Paule speaketh especially here, but they did wholy ouerthrow faith, and put out of place the word of God, so that they did not only not beseme Saincts, but did plainly abolish all Saincts. Those former therefore were fables and tales of men, which are not beleeued, neither esteemed any thing of, but rather laught at, although in the mean season they corrupt good maners, withdraw Christians from serious matters, and make them slack and slothful. But these latter are deuilish fables, which are beleeued for a truth, and counted for serious, yea and heauenly matters, when as notwithstanding they be nothing els but fained deuises of Satan, whereby he with his angells deludeth and mocketh vs.

Neither iesting. Hereby he vnderstandeth all pleasaunt speeches, which they whom they call iesters are wont to vse, to make men merry, which by pleasaunt discourses and mery tearmes doe moue laughter & stirre vp mens minds to mirth & cheerefulnes, which is wont to be vsuall in ciuill bankets, and when ciuill companions meete togither. This iesting the Heathen counted for a vertue, especially Aristotle. But Paul among Christians giueth it place among vices. For Christians haue other speeches, wherby they may recreat and cheere them selues in Christ, which also do bring some profit with them, although it easily hapneth, that many Christians do offend oftentimes herein. But they that are true Christians, doe neuer praise it, neither doe suffer that any should giue him selfe to this iesting, and study to exceede therein, but they reproue and prohibit him, especially in the Church, in ꝑ time of preaching and teaching. For Christ hath witnessed, that we shall in the last day giue an account of euery idle worde. It is meete in deede that Christians be an elegant & amiable people, but therewithall graue, that there may be seene in them a seuere gentlenes, and a gentle seueritie, as the life of Christ is described vnto vs in the Gospells.

Iesting neither allowed nor vsed among Christians.

Matth. 12. 36

Things which are not comely, but rather giuing of thankes. This comprehendeth all idle words, which want a proper name. Now I call them idle words which make neither to the edifying of faith, nor to the vse of our corporall life. For there be things enow both profitable and pleasaunt, which when it pleaseth vs to speake, we may talke of in the short time of this life, as of Christ, of loue, and other things either necessary or profitable. Whereof

Idle wordes.

Paule admoniſheth when he ſayth: but rather giuing of thankes. For our daily ſpeech ought to be the praiſe of God, and giuing of thankes to him, as well priuatly, as publikely in ſermons, for ſuch infinite good thinges, as he hath giuen vnto vs in Chriſt, euen vnſpeakeable. But ſuch is the maner of our reaſon & nature, that neceſſary and profitable thinges are neglected, and fooliſh & friuolous things are chiefly regarded. Now marke here, if Paul doth not ſuffer in Chriſtians ſpeeches that be onely pleaſant and tending to mirth, what thinkeſt thou would he ſay of that peſtilēt backebyting and ſclaundering, which reigneth now in all companies of men, euen them that be priuate, when two oftentimes doe talke togither? Yea what would he ſay of them, which openly in ſermons do as it were bite and rent one an other with reprochful wordes, and maliciouſly accuſe and ſpeake euill one of an other?

For this ye know, that no whoremonger, neither vncleane perſon, nor couetous perſon, which is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Chriſt and of God. In theſe wordes he doth very plainly pronounce againſt them which are infected wᵗ ſuch vices, that they are heathen vnder the name of Chriſtians, how many ſoeuer do not bring forth the frutes of faith. This is a briefe and a certaine ſentence: He that is a fornicator, hath denied ꝑ faith, an vncleane perſon hath denied ꝑ faith, a couetous perſon hath denied ꝑ faith, all ſuch are Apoſtataes, periured, & traitours towards God: as Paul writeth alſo vnto Timothe, of him ꝑ neglecteth them that be of his familie: If there be any, ſayth he, that prouideth not for his owne, & namely for them of his houſhold, he denieth the faith, and is worſe then an Infidell. How could he more ſeuerely and terribly fraie vs from vices? For he ſayth: For this ye know, as if he ſayd: Do not ſo much as dout, count it not for a play, neither let it be a ſport vnto you, neither comfort your ſelues with vaine hope of a Chriſtian name, and for that ye are counted Chriſtians, theſe thinges ſhall profit you no more, then it profited the Iewes, that they were the children of Abraham, and Diſciples of Moſes. It was ſpoken to all which Chriſt ſayth Matth. 7: Not euery one that ſayth vnto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdome of heauen, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heauen: there is neede of doing, and our faith muſt be proued by workes. Whom therefore that great force of heauenly fire ſhall not enflame vnto godlines, that is, the

A fornicator an vncleane perſon and a couetous perſon haue denied the faith. 1. *Tim.* 5 8.

Two very forcible meanes to

admonition

admonition of the incomparable loue of God toward vs, which he set in the first place, him let these horrible threatnings of hell fire moue, to wit, whereas he witnesseth, that as many as wil not follow God, and walke in loue, and shew forth their faith by their workes, are neither the sonnes of God, nor heires of his kingdome, whereupon it followeth, that they are undoutedly heires with Satan of hell fire. Whom therefore these two so mightie prouokements shall not stirre vp to the feare of God & godlines, with all diligence to doe the dutie of a Christian, he is plainly a blocke and a stone, hauing a hart harder then the anuill as Job sayth. stirre vs vp vnto godlines.

He particularly reproueth a couetous person, and pronounceth him an Idolater or worshipper of images, whereby surely he declareth, how greatly he is displeased with them that are infected with this vice, and in the third chapter of his Epistle to the Colossians he sayth also the same thing of him. The cause hereof I thinke to be this: other sinners vse onely that thinge, wherein they offend, and make it serue their lust and desire: so the fornicator and vncleane person vse their body to pleasure: the proud person vseth riches, learning, the fauour of men, and such like, vnto glory: onely this miserable Idolater is a slaue to his money and riches, and his sinne is, that he spareth his money and goods, keepeth and hourdeth them vp, dareth not apply them neither to his owne vse, nor to the vse of other, but doth plainly serue and worship them as his god, and so much esteemeth them, that he would sooner lose and suffer to perish the kingdome of God, then he would spende his money, or giue the value of a rush toward the maintaining either of a preacher, or an instructer of youth, whereby the word of God and his kingdom might be furthered. Forasmuch therefore as all the trust and hope of such a man is reposed in money, and not in God alone, who giueth him aboundantly whereby to liue, money is worthely called his god, and he him selfe said to be an Idolater, and hath no inheritance in the kingdom of heauen. What can be inuented more filthy and pestilent then this disease? Wo vnto thee, incredulitie, howe an abominable and hurtfull euill art thou? The couetous man an idolater.

Let no man deceiue you with vaine wordes. These are the vaine wordes of them which extenuate and make light of fornication and such like sinnes, as though they were not greatly euill, We must take heede we be not deceiued with vaine wordes.

or did so much offend God. There were not wanting Philosophers and Poets among the Heathen, which counted all vse of lecherie beside onely adulterie, lawfull, as a thing naturall, as is to vse meate and drinke. So sayth Terence: It is not a wickednes, beleeue me, for a young man to follow harlots, &c. But this is to be ignorant of God, and to liue according to the lore of concupiscence, as the Gentiles were wont to doe. Moreouer such vaine words are those, which albeit they haue some likelihood of truth, yet in deede are trifling, and shall not excuse any. So couetousnes doth not want a cloke and pretence for it selfe: for him that seeketh his owne with the discommoditie of others, they call a good husband, industrious, one that looketh to his busines, although in the meane while the poore perish with hunger, or are otherwise afflicted aboue their strength. Wherefore such speeches are prophane and heathnish, by which loue is extinguished, & they which giue eare to them & beleeue them, are deluded with a vaine hope.

The wrath & vengeance of God hangeth ouer fornicators, vncleane & couetous persons.

For, for such things commeth the wrath of God vpon the children of disobedience. This is an other light which we ought to follow, leauing the obscure light of reason, which doth not greatly condemne fornication, vncleannes, couetousnes, &c. This our light witnesseth, that for such things the wrath of God commeth vpon vnbeleeuers, whom he calleth the children of disobedience, and therefore can not abide to beleeue the word of God, & to giue them selues to the obedience of faith. This Paule declareth 1. Cor. 10 by many examples, where he sayth that a great part of the people was slaine for fornication, of which deede is spoken also Num. 25. For violence also, couetousnes, and vncleannes, the whole world was destroyed by the flood. Wherefore a sufficient sharpe, yea and a certaine vengeance abideth them that are infected with these wickednesses. Now he calleth them the children of disobedience, that is, of incredulitie, which is as much as if he had sayd: of them that haue reuolted from the faith, and haue renounced Christ. Hereby therefore we see and learne, that he that doth not approue his faith by workes, is no better then a Heathen, yea worse, inasmuch as he hath renounced Christ, and denied the faith once receiued. For this cause therefore the vengeance and wrath of God shal come vpon them that are such, as we Germanes do now trie, vnto whom God sendeth abundantly the pestilence, famine, & cruell warres. Let men take heede they giue

no

no care to those deceiuers, which with vaine words promise that those sinnes shal escape vnpunished: Let those slacke and slothfull Christians beware, who although they be not blinde Heathen, but know well that vncleannes and couetousnes are sinnes, and thinke or teach no otherwise, do neuertheles liue wickedly, resting vpon faith, whereby they hope that they shall obtaine saluation without workes, forasmuch as workes do not saue: Yea albeit they verie well know, that faith without workes is a fained faith, and that worthie frutes and good workes must needes follow, where a true and sound faith is, yet notwithstãding they liue securely in their sinnes, presuming of the grace and mercy of God, nothing fearing God and his iudgement, when as notwithstanding it is certaine, that God doth require the mortification of the olde Adam, and good frutes of good trees. Although perhaps Paule speaketh not here properly of these, but of thē which thinke, and in vaine wordes teach, that fornication, couetousnes, and such like are not sinnes, as the blynde Heathen did, & many do at this day vnder the name of Christians: yet is it to be feared, seing they liue no better then the heathen do, & be themselues fornicatours & couetous persons, þ they shall feele þ like vengeance of God with them, yea so much more grieuous vēgeance, as they doe know more certainly that those are sinnes, according to that saying Rom. 2: Thinkest thou this, O thou man, that condemnest them which do such thinges, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the iudgement of God? after thine hardnes, and heart that can not repent, thou heapest vnto thy selfe wrath against the daye of wrath, & of the declaration of the iust iudgement of God. &c.

Be not therefore companions with them: For ye were once darkenes, but are now light in the Lord: walke as children of light. So Peter also sayth, that it is sufficient for vs, that we haue spent the time past of our life after the lust of the Gentiles, but from hence forth should haue nothing common with them, but spend the rest of our life in the seruice and worship of God. When we were Gentiles, we knew not that these were sinnes, we were so blynded through incredulitie and ignorance of God. But after that we are made light in the Lord, that is, lightned by Christ, we do not onely well vnderstand what God is, and what he requireth of vs, what sinne and iniquitie is, but are also able

They which are not yet lightned by Christ, are blinde and ignorant, but they whom

he hath lightened, doe know both God & their duty toward him.

now to be in steede of light vnto others, and to teach them those things which we haue learned. Such Paul said the Philippians were, that they shined as lights in the world in the middes of a naughtie & crooked nation. So before we were not onely darke, but darkenes it selfe, inasmuch as we were not onely ignorant and erred, but did also bring other into the same darkenes, both by wordes and deedes. Let vs be thankefull therefore to him, which hath called vs out of this darkenes into his meruelous light, walking as the children of light, which Peter also admonisheth vs to do.

For the fruite of the Spirit is in all goodnes, and righteousnes, and truth. Forasmuch as he hath here spoken of light, it had ben more agreable to haue added, for the frute of light, as the Latin editions haue, then of the Spirit, as it is read in the Greeke. Who knoweth, whether the greekes coppies were here chaunged vpon this occasion, for that Paule in the Epistle to the Galathians entreateth of the frutes of the spirit? But this skilleth litle, of the Spirit, and of light are all one in this place. Goodnes therefore is a fruite either of the Spirit or of light, contrarie to couetousnes, whereby a Christian man is good, that is, profitable and beneficiall to others, ready to gratifie and do well to his neighbours. Righteousnes being a frute of the Spirit is contrarie to couetousnes. For it maketh that no man doth take awaye from an other that which is his, either by violence, either by craft or guile, but that he endeuour rather to giue vnto euerie man that which is his owne. Truth is a frute of the Spirit contrarie to hypocrisie & lying, which requireth that a Christian be true and vncorrupte not onely in wordes, but also in his whole life, that he doe not glorie of the name of a Christian without workes, that he be not called a Christian, & yet liue after the maner of the Heathen, in fornication, vncleannes, couetousnes, and other vices, &c.

Goodnes.

Righteousnes.

Truth.

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A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, WHEREIN IS DECLARED HOW GOD CARETH and prouideth for them that bé his.

Luke 5.

Verse 1. IT Hen it came to paſſe, as the people preaſed vpō him to heare the word of God, that he ſtood by the lake of Genneſaret.

2. And ſaw two ſhips ſtand by the lake ſide, but the fiſhermen were gone out of them, & were waſhing their nettes.

3. And he entered into one of the ſhips which was Simons, and required him that he would thruſt of a litle from the land: & he ſate down, and taught the people out of the ſhip.

4. Now when he had left ſpeaking, he ſaid vnto Simon: lanche out into the deepe, & let downe your nettes to make a draught.

5. Then Simon aunſwered and ſayd vnto him: Maiſter, we haue trauailed ſore all night, and haue taken nothing, neuertheles at thy word I will let downe the net.

6. And when they had ſo done, they incloſed a great multitude of fiſhes, ſo that their net brake.

7. And they beckened to their partners which were in the other ſhip, that they ſhould come and helpe them, who came thē and filled both the ſhips, that they did ſinke.

8. Now when Simon Peter saw it, he fell downe at Iesus knees saying: Lord go from me, for I am a synfull man.

9. For he was vtterly astonied and all that were with him, for the draught of fishes which they tooke.

10. And so was also Iames and Iohn the sonnes of Zebedeus, which were companions with Simon. Then Iesus said vnto Simon: feare not: from hence forth thou shalt catch men.

11. And when they had brought the ships to lād, they forsooke all and folowed him.

The faithful shall wāt nothing that is necessary for the sustentation of this life.

TO them that beleeue this text is most easie to be vnderstood, which setteth forth two thinges vnto vs, namely faith, and temporall good thinges, & faith, and eternall good thinges. First it declareth vnto them that beleeue in Christ, that they shal haue sufficient wherewith to susteine themselues euen in this life: which Christ sheweth by this, when he giueth so many fishes to Peter and his companions, as they durst not so much as desire. So that Christ is carefull euen how to feede the bellie, if that cursed incredulitie be not na hinderance thereunto. For beholde S. Peter, and consider his heart aright in your minde, then shall ye fynde, that he did not so much as thinke, that he should take so many fishes. God therefore is present, and causeth fishes to come into the nette, euen moe then they would haue wished. By which example we are admonished that they shall haue sufficiēt of those thinges that are necessary for the sustentation of this life, which do beleeue, but they that do not beleeue can neuer be satisfied, whereby they fall into all kinde of vices. Hereunto pertaineth that which S. Paule sayth 1. Tim. 6: Godlines is great gaine, if a man be content with that he hath. For we brought nothing into the world, and it is certaine, that we may cary nothing out, therefore when we haue foode and rayment, let vs therewith be content. For they that wilbe rich, fall into tentation and snares, and into many foolish and noysome lustes, which drowne men in

in perdition & destruction. For the desire of money is the roote of all euell, which while some lusted after, they erred from the faith, & perced themselues through with many sorrowes. This place of S. Paul plainly declareth what followeth our vnbeliefe, into wit, that it traueleth to get substance, and laboureth to be rich, and falleth into the tentation and snares of the Deuell. But we can not see that, forasmuch as it is spirituall. If we could as well see the hurt, which it bringeth to spirituall thinges, as we can see that which it bringeth to corporall and outward thinges, then were it an easie matter to preach vnto vs. For wee see plainely in outward thinges, how he that is giuen to the desire of money, scrapeth and gathereth togither, doth iniurie to all men, that he alone may gather togither and heape vp many thinges, whereunto he may trust and say: Well, nowe haue I goodes enough. Whereby we may gather how vnkinde & vnmerciful a couetous man is: for he doeth good to no man, he sheweth himselfe gentle and kynde to no man, he giueth nothing to any man, but looketh vnto his owne lucre and commoditie. Frutes of incredulity.

Now this is a cursed thing, that we can not so much as trust vnto the Lord, that he will feede our belly, thinking alwayes that we shall perish with hunger, when as notwithstanding we shall haue thinges necessarie and that which is sufficient for vs, as Christ sayth Matth. 6: I say vnto you, be not carefull for your life, what ye shall eate, or what ye shall drinke: nor yet for your bodie, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more worth then meate? and the bodie then rayment? Behold the foules of the ayre: for they sow not, neither reape, nor carie into the barnes: yet your heauenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better then they? VVhich of you by taking care, is able to adde one cubit vnto his stature? And why care ye for rayment? Learne how the lillies of the field do grow: they are not weried, neither spinne: yet I say vnto you, that euen Salomon in all his glorie, was not arayed like one of these. VVherefore if God so clothe the grasse of the field, which though it stād to day, is to morow cast into the ouen, shall he not do much more vnto you, O ye of litle faith? Therefore take no thought, saying: what shall we eat? or what shall we drinke? or wherewith shall we be clothed? (For after all these thinges seeke the Gentiles:) For your heauenly Father knoweth that ye haue neede of all these thinges.

But seeke ye first the kingdome of God and his righteousnes, and all these thinges shalbe ministred vnto you. Care not then for the morow: for the morow shall care for it selfe: the daye hath enough with his owne griefe. Ye see in this place, how God hath a care for the foules and flowers, & doth adorne them after a most goodly sort: how much more will God giue vnto vs those thinges that be necessarie? and yet we can not put our trust in him, so hath the Deuell entangled vs in his snares. When one commeth so farre, that he is not content with that he hath, neither trusteth in God, then charitie must needes sodenly ceasse, so that he doth good to no man, but onely prouideth that his owne heape be encreased. Hereupon came the spirituall state of sacrificing Priests and Monkes, that they might onely helpe themselues, feede their belly, auoide labour, enter into Monasteries, that thereof did rise a true prouerbe: Desperation maketh a Monke, yea not only a Monk, but sacrificing Priests, Bishops & Popes: for they trust not in God, that he is able to feede them, but they studie vpon this onely, that they may be deliuered from all miserie and infirmitie, which is altogether to liue in incredulitie: they neuer trusted in God, that he is able to giue them nourishment and thinges necessarie, if any of them should marry a wife and remaine without that state of Antichrist.

Where trust in God is not there charitie ceasseth.

Moreouer, here is an example set forth vnto vs, which prouoketh and alloureth vs to confidence, and first that we commit our bellie to God: for he hath a care of vs, euen in temporall things. Which sufficiently appeareth in Peter, whereas he tooke such a great multitude of fishes, which ranne by great companies into his nettes. Whereby is plainly signified that God will forsake no man, but that euerie one shall haue enough, if that we shall onely trust in him, as the 37. Psal. affirmeth: I haue bin yong, and now am olde, and yet saw I neuer the righteous forsaken, nor his seede begging bread. Things necessarie shal not be wanting vnto vs, if faith be not wanting: for before we should want, the very Angels should come, & minister vnto vs foode. Whereas therefore men are commonly oppressed with so great miserie, onely vnbeliefe is the cause thereof. And albeit God be with vs, notwithstanding he requireth yet of vs, worke or labour, and hope, if he at any time differre somewhat to helpe vs. He commaundeth Peter here, that for the taking of fishes, he should cast forth

VVe must labour, & not be carefull, but commit the successe vnto God.

forth his nettes: Lanche out into the deepe, sayth he, and let dovvne your nets to make a draught, as if the Lord said: Do thou that which belongeth to a fisher, cast thy net into the deepe, and commit the successe vnto me, leaue the care vnto me. God leaueth not the care vnto thee, but the worke and labour: howbeit we after a cleane contrarie order, study to commit the care to our selues and the labour to him. Whereby it commeth to passe, that euerie one for himselfe applieth his mynde earnestly to gaine, and to gather money vnto himselfe, that he may not be enforced by any meanes to take paines and labour. But if thou wilt liue a Christian life, leaue vnto thy God to care howe the fishes shall come into the nets, and goe thou, and take vpon thee the state wherein thou mayst labour. Howbeit for the most part, we wish such states of life, as in which there is no neede of labour, which is altogether a deuelish thing. And therefore haue we bin consecrated Monkes and sacrificing Priests, that we might liue onely like gentlemen, without labour. And for the same cause parents haue set their children to schole, that at ỹ last they might liue merie dayes, and so serue God, as they thought. Whereby it came to that passe that they did not know, what a good life was: forasmuch as God especially commendeth that, and that in deed is acceptable vnto him, which is gotten with the sweat of the browes, as he commaunded Adam. Gen. 3. In the svveat of thy face shalt thou eate breade. And the deeper thou art occupied in this lawe, in so much better case thy thinges are, wherefore follow thy worke, labour, and trust in God, all carefulnes being cast of.

Now some murmur, and say, if faith be preached, that we must trust in God, and leaue the care vnto him, I might long enough, say they, beleeue or trust, before I should haue wherewithall to be fed and susteined, if I should not labour. Yea it is plaine enough that thou must labour, forasmuch as labour is cõmaunded thee: Howbeit suffer God to care for thee, beleeue thou, and labour, then shalt thou assuredly haue those thinges that be necessarie for the sustentation of thy life. And this is an other thing, that we must hope notwithstanding, though God differreth for a time. Therefore he suffreth them to labour all the night, and to take nothing, and sheweth himselfe to be such a one, as will suffer them to perish with hunger. Which might haue

We must still labour and hope, though God differreth his help for a time, for he will at the last assuredly helpe vs.

come into the minde of Peter, when he had fished so long and taken nothing, so that he might haue said: now God will suffer my belly to perish with pining and famine. Howbeit he doth not so, but goeth on still in his labour, he plieth his worke, & hopeth that God at the last will giue him fishes, albeit he differreth a time. God therefore is present, and giueth him so many fishes in one day, as he could scarce take in ỳ space of eight dates. Wherefore these thinges are to be learned well of thee, that thou labour and hope, although God differreth his blessing a litle. For albeit he differreth a while, and suffreth thee to labour sore, so that thou now thinke thy labour to be lost, yet must thou not therefore despeire, but repose thy hope in him, trusting assuredly that he will at ỳ last giue thee prosperous successe. For he wil certainly come & giue more then thou didst neede, as he did here vnto S. Peter. Wherefore if God delayeth with thee a litle, thinke with thy selfe, he delayed also with S. Peter, & yet afterward gaue vnto him aboundantly. Commit thy matter therefore to his good will and pleasure, and leaue not of thy worke, but hope still, and then shall not thy hope be frustrate. Thus much concerning the former part of the text, now let vs here the latter. After therefore that they had taken fishes, and tasted the frute of faith, then faith is increased and augmented. We therefore must go so farre, that we may commit our bellie to God: for he that can not commit so much as his bellie to him, will neuer commit his soule vnto him. Howbeit that is onely a childish faith: Here we learne first to go by benches and settles: here we do feede on milke as yet; but we must likewise learne by these to commit our soule also to God. The Euangelist so meaneth when he sayth:

Now when Simon Peter saw it, he fell downe at Iesus knees, saying: Lord goe from me, for I am a sinnefull man. For he was vtterly astonied, and all that were with him, for the draught of fishes which they tooke. Let Peter here be a type or figure of them which beleeue eternal good thinges, and counte him as one verily looking for & seeing the good things to come. A sinful conscience is of that nature, that it so behaueth it selfe, as Peter here did, whereas he flieth his Sauiour, and thinketh: Lord I am more vnworthy, then that I should be saued, and sit among thy Saincts and Angels: for that good is most exceeding high. Here a straight conscience is not able to comprehend such great good

The nature of a synnefull conscience.

good thinges, but it thus thinketh: If I were as Peter & Paul, I could easily beleeue: Which is altogether a foolish and vaine thinge. For if thou wouldest place thy selfe according to thine owne holines, thou shouldest build vpon the sande. Thou must not do so, but behaue thy selfe like vnto Peter, for in that he esteemed himselfe vile, and iudged himselfe vnworthy of so great grace, he rightly became worthy. And therefore, whereas thou art a synner, thou must truste in God, and dilate and open wide thy conscience and heart, that grace may enter in. After thou hast now knowne God, thou must reiect none of his giftes, that is, when as thou seest the great good things, thou must not despeire. It is good that we know our selues, & the deeper we know our selues, so much the better. But that grace is not to be refused because of thy synnes. For when thou shalt synde thy conscience to tremble, so that it would driue away synnes, then art thou most ready and most fitte to receiue grace, then shalt thou synde comfort in thy conscience and say with Micheas: VVho is such a God as thou, that pardonest wickednes, & castest all our synnes into the bottome of the sea? Whosoeuer take not away synnes, they are no Gods, but idols: whereupon he sayeth rightly, that none is like vnto our God. For other gods will synde and not bring godlines, but the Almightie God doth not finde it, but bring it: wherefore thou must not forthwith despeire, if thy conscience trembleth and feeleth synne. For the more defiled that thou art, so much the sooner doeth the Lord poure in his grace, if so be thou be repentant and thirstest after it. A great part goe so farre that they saye they merit grace, whiles they dispose them selues thereunto, which is, as they interpret, whiles they do that which lyeth in them, and also that they doe satisfie for their synnes. But it is not so. The Scripture teacheth vs that it is God that taketh away synne, and casteth it into the bottome of the sea. We shall not put away synnes by our workes, neither shall we be iustified of our selues. God himselfe, and none but he shall do the thinge, of his meere grace as Esay sayth: I am, euen I am he onely, that for myne owne selfes sake doe take awaye thine offences, and forget thy synnes, so that I will neuer thinke vpon them more. And so must thou beleeue, otherwise thou shalt neuer obtaine a ioyfull conscience. Wherefore, when as Peter sayd, I am a synner, he saide right. It is true in deede, there were causes, why

Though we feele ỹ burdē of our sinnes we must not despeire, but truste in God that he will remit thē & receiue vs vnto grace.

Mich.7.

Esa.43.25.

he might be afrayde of himselfe, and humble himselfe, but he ought not to refuse God, but most willingly receiue him. Wherfore when thou shalt feele thy synne, like as Peter did, and shalt perceiue that thou wouldest now flie from God, then is it neede that thou do forthwith turne thy selfe, and come more and more vnto him. For if God should goe away, and would not take away thy synne, would not come vnto thee, nor seeke thee, yet the more thou perceiuest thy selfe a synner, the more hast thou ought est to make vnto him, which see thou marke well, and lay it vp in a myndefull memorie. For as Sainct Peter doeth here, so all consciences do, which are terrified of synnes, and would flie from God, & seeke an other god, do not thou leaue so, but come boldly, and ioyne thy selfe neerer vnto God. Otherwise if one goe away to seeke workes, and helpe of an other god, he is then found like the foolish Virgines, which while they goe to get themselues oyle, are in the meane season shut out. But what doeth Christ, when Peter so humbleth himselfe? and by reason of his great feare and terrour, desireth the Lord to depart from him? did he leaue him in such desperation of himselfe? No truly, but he comforteth him, saying thus:

God sustayneth ỹ faithfull both in body & spirit.

Feare not, from hēce forth thou shalt catch mē. This is a ioyfull word, whereby weake heartes receiue comfort. Now therefore, that God hath a care for vs, yea euen in those thinges that pertaine to the body, ye see by this, that he giueth Peter so many fishes: he maketh him also so full and rich in spirit, that he ought to bestow some of his plenty vpon others. He maketh him a fisher both in body and in spirit: in body, for that he taketh many fishes which he may sell: but in spirit he is a fisher of men. For he hath the Gospel, whereby other men must be brought to God by him, and the kingdome of Christ be increased. Loe, it commeth to passe, that where men beleeue, the Lord giueth so much, as succoureth and helpeth all men. The faithfull man outwardly helpeth the needy with his substaunce and goods: And from within he breaketh forth, teacheth other, and enricheth them also inwardly. For such a man can not hold his peace, but is enforced to shew and declare to others, how he is delt with, as it is in the 51. Psal. Make me a cleane heart, O God, and renue a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me. O giue me the comfort of thy helpe

againe, and ſtablish me with thy free Spirit. Then shall I teach thy wayes vnto the wicked, and ſynners shalbe conuerted vnto thee. And in an other Pſalme alſo Dauid ſayeth: I beleeued, Pſal. 116. 10.
and therefore will I ſpeake. Which is thus much in effect: when I beleeue, I knowe God, and taſt of his goodnes, then I conſider the caſe of other men, and go and declare ſuch knowledge and goodnes of God vnto them. We ſee therefore in this text, howe carefull God is for them that be his, and that he doth ſuſteine them both in body and in ſpirit. But if he doth ſometime differre any thinge, without all doute it is through the fault of our incredulitie, or becauſe we haue now new begon to beleeue. For where faith is new and litle, there is ſometime ſmall and ſclender helpe, that we may learne to know the Lord, and to truſt in him. But when we haue gone ſo farre that we truſt ſtrongly in God, then nothing can be wanting to vs, then God poureth vpon vs both corporall and ſpirituall good thinges, and ſo aboundant treaſures that we may be able to helpe others. This in deede is to enrich the poore and to fill the hungrie. Thus much ſhall ſuffize concerning this text.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, CONCERNING TRVST IN GOD IN PENVRIE AND DISTRESSE.

Marc. 8.

Verſe 1. IN thoſe dayes, when there was a verie great multitude, and had nothing to eate, Ieſus called his diſciples to him, and ſaid vnto them:

2. I haue compassion on the multitude, because they haue now cõtinued with me three dayes, and haue nothing to eate.

3. And if I send them awaye fasting to the ir own houses, they would faint by the waye: for some of them came from farre.

4. Then his disciples aunswered him, whence can a man satisfie these with bread here in the wildernes?

5. And he asked them, how many loaues haue ye? and they said, seuen.

6. Then he commaunded the multitude to sit downe on the ground: and he tooke the seuen loaues, and gaue thankes, brake them, and gaue to his disciples to set before them, & they did set them before the people.

7. They had also a few small fishes: and when he had giuen thankes, he commaunded them also to be set before them.

8. So they did eate and were suffised, and they tooke vp of the broken meate that was left, seuen baskets full.

9. And they that had eatẽ, were about 4. thousand: so he sent them awaye.

I Hope dearely beloued, that ye doe well vnderstand the meaning of this text. For your vnderstanding is sufficiently well grounded in these mysteries, so that ye doe easily perceiue what good is to be looked for in the Gospell, and what is prescribed vnto vs therein, namely the true nature and qualitie of fayth. And this is the cause why Christ is of all the Euangelistes set forth to be so louing and gentle: for although the doings and workes described of them doe oftentimes varie, neuertheles the simplicitie of fayth remayneth alwayes alike. Moreouer this

this text doeth so liuely set forth Christ vnto vs in his colours, that it may be manifest and well knowen vnto euerie one of vs, what we ought to promise our selues concerning him, to wit: that he is mercifull, bountifull, gentle, who succoureth all that flie vnto him for helpe. And such ought to be the image of fayth. For the Scripture setteth before vs a double image: one of feare, which representeth to our eyes the horrible wrath of God, before which no man is able to stand, but rather we are all enforced to be cast downe in minde, when we see it, vnles we be strengthned by fayth. Howbeit against this is sette the other image namely of grace, which fayth doeth attentiuely behold, and taketh from hence principles of comfort, and conceiueth trust and confidence in the fauour of God, hauing this hope, that man can not promise to him selfe from God so manye good thinges, but that he hath infinite moe treasures in a readines for him.

By the Lawe we are terrified and cast downe, but by the Gospell we are comforted & raised vp.

Ye haue now oftetimes heard, that there are two sorts of good thinges, spirituall and corporall. The Gospell by these temporall and corporall good thinges teacheth vs the faith of children, and they are vnto the weake as a certaine meane or helpe, whereby they may learne the goodnes of God, how bountifull he is in bestowing his riches vpon vs, and that we ought in spirituall thinges also to place all our hope and trust in him. For if we be now instructed by the Gospell, that God will giue foode to our bellie, we may thereupon account with our selues, that he will nourish & cloath our soules with spirituall good thinges. If I can not commit my body vnto him that he may feede it, much lesse can I commit my soule vnto him that he may alwayes preserue it. Or if I can not be brought to beleeue, that a crowne of golde shalbe giuen vnto me of him, how I pray you, shall I hope for tenne of crownes of golde of him? from whom I dare not promise to my selfe so much as a peece of bread, truly much lesse shall I be perswaded to beleeue, that he will giue a fearme vnto me, or his whole inheritaunce. Now he that is not able to atteine vnto this tender, and as it were as yet sucking faith, to him surely it is verie hard to beleeue, that God will pardon his synnes, or preserue his soule for euer. Forasmuch as we are perswaded, that the soule is by infinite degrees to be preferred before the bellie, toward which notwithstanding he is touched

The temporall and outwarde blessings of God ought to be as meanes to make vs hope and trust in him, that he will also bestow vpon vs spirituall and eternal good thinges.

with compassion as this our present text teacheth. Wherefore
1.Pet.2. Saint Peter hath rightly admonished: Beloued brethren, as new borne babes desire that sincere milke of the word, that ye may growe thereby. For it is not enough that the infant being put to the teate doe sucke, but he must also wax greater, and gather strength, that he may accustome himselfe to feede on breade, and stronger meate. Now to eate milke is to tast of the fauour and grace of God, which is then tasted of, when a triall thereof is had in our life. For although I should preach an hundred yeares of the bountifulnes, fauour, liberalitie and gentlenes of God toward vs, it would profit me nothing vnlesse I haue a triall and taste of those commodities, neither could I learne rightly to trust in God thereby. Hereof also thou mayst coniecture how rare a Christian man is. There are many which say, that they commit their bellie to God, but that sticketh onely in the tounge and lippes, when as rather it ought to perce to the heart.

Let vs nowe consider an example teaching vs the qualitie
The qualitie and nature of faith. and nature of faith. The Apostle Heb. 11. hath written thus: Faith is the ground of thinges, which are hoped for, and the euidence of thinges which are not seene, which is thus much in effect: faith is the foundation, whereby I looke for that good thinge, which is neither seene with the eyes, nor heard with the eares, but which I must onely hope for. Euen as in our present text it plainly appeareth, wherein we reade that there were about foure thousand men, who togither with their wiues and children had now suffred hunger three dayes (was not this a notable kynde of fasting?) yet were not famished with hunger, being farre from their houses, and destitute of those necessaries, whereby the bodie is susteined. Now Paule sayth that faith is a thinge whereby a man hopeth for those thinges which appeare not to the eyes. Such a fayth had this multitude, which although they see no meate, neuertheles they trust in God, that he will feede them. What doeth Christ here? he is moued with compassion, he demaundeth of the disciples with what vittailes, or with what thinge their hunger may be taken away. To whom his disciples aunswere: whence can a man satisfie such a multitude here in the wildernes? Here ye see how mans reason and fayth agree togither, that the wiser reason is, so much lesse can

it

it submit it selfe to the workes of God. For this cause therefore did he aske his disciples, that euerie one of them might trie their owne reason, and learne how much the capacitie of man and faith do differ one from an other.

Here it appeareth vnto vs how reason is blynde, and how, when faith commeth, it ought to giue place. Whereof let this be as an example: If I were a maried man, hauing a wife and a companie of children, and had nothing wherewith to nourish them, neither would any man giue me any thinge: yet should it be my dutie to beleeue and hope, that God will prouide for me. But when as I see my hope to be in vaine, and that I am not succoured byandby with nourishment and cloathing, then if I be faithles, I yeeld vnto desperation, and goe and purpose an other thinge with my selfe, I applie my mynde to vnhoneſt trades, that I may get somewhat thereby, as theft, deceit, and other such practizes, and by all meanes that I am able, I passe through the stormes of aduersitie. See what filthie incredulitie bringeth vnto man. But if I be endued with faith, I shut mine eyes and say: Most gentle father, I am thy creature, and thy worke, it can not be denied but thou hast created me, I will put all my trust in thee, which hast greater care of my welfare then I my selfe. Thou wilt well nourish, feede, cloath, and helpe, where and when thou shalt know best. So faith is a sure foundation, whereunto I trusting, doe looke for those thinges which I see not, and that I may speake at once, it shall not want those thinges that be necessarie. Surely the Angels themselues should come downe from heauen, & giue bread digged euen out of the earth, vnto such a faithfull man, that he might be nourished, rather then he should be pined with hunger, yea heauen and earth shall passe, before God will suffer a man endued with such faith to want either clothing or any other necessarie thinge. This singular trust and confidence in God, the comfortable and effectuall worde of the diuine promise doeth require. Whereof Dauid glorieth Psal. 37: I haue been young and nowe am olde, and yet sawe I neuer the righteous forsaken, nor his seede begging bread. And againe: God knoweth the dayes of the righteous, their inheritaunce shall continue for euer. They shall not be confounded in the perilous time, and in the dayes of dearth they shall haue enough. But if we shall aske counsell

Reason must giue place to faith.

No maner of thing that is good shalbe wanting to ỹ faithfull.

of reason, it will forthwith say (as the disciples did before) this thinge is vnpossible: for it looketh for nothing, it trusteth to nothing, when nothing is present. Of like difference were the disciples, who thought thus with themselues: how can it be that such a great multitude of men should be here refreshed with meate? truly it exceedeth our capacitie. If they had seene an heape of money, store of brcade, and shambles full of flesh, they could then haue easily relieued this present necessitie, they could haue put all in a good hope, and fully haue disposed all thinges, according to the capacitie of their reason.

And thus much shall suffize to be spoken concerning the faith of tempozall good things: now we will entreat of spirituall good thinges, which shall come vnto vs when we shall die. Then shall we see death set before our eyes, when as notwithstanding we would willingly liue, then shall hell appeare vnto vs, when we rather desire for heauen, then shall we behold the iudgement of God, notwithstanding his grace would be much more acceptable vnto vs. In a summe, whatsoeuer we would desire to see, shalbe taken out of our sight, yea and no creature shall helpe vs against death, hell, and the iudgement of God. But if I beleeue, I saye thus vnto my selfe: well, faith is a sure foundation herewith I being staied vp, shall attaine vnto those thinges which are verie farre out of my sight, albeit those thinges be horrible which be in my sight, yet shall they not hurt him that beleeueth. Although therefore I doe presently see nothinge, but death, hell, and the iudgement of God, yet must I consider none of these, but rather my mynde is to be confirmed with an vndouted trust, that God by the vertue of his promise, not in respect of my merites or workes, will giue vnto me life, blessednes, and grace. This in deede is to cleaue vnto God by syncere fayth, which is here verie well painted forth in this grosse and bodily image of foure thousand men, who cleauing to God onely by faith, did not doute that they should be refreshed of him. If they had iudged according to the capacitie of their reason, they would haue murmured, and said after this sort: surely we are a verie great multitude, we are here in the wide wilgernes, we haue emptie and hungrie stomackes, here is nothing that is able to fill the. Howbeit they murmured of none of these things, but conceiuing a sure confidence, reasoning nothing against God after

Faith ceasseth not to truste in God euen in greatest extremitie and distresse.

after the affection of men, they commende them selues wholy to the good will of God, and commit vnto him this vrging necessitie of hunger, they them selues being quiet from all care. Then God, before this care commeth vpon them, and before they begin to aske of him, is present, being more carefull for them, then they are for them selues, & sayth on this sort: I am moued with compassion toward the multitude: if I send them away fasting, it is a daunger lest they faint by the way. Behold how gentle & bountifull we haue God toward vs, who hath euen a care to feede the vncleane belly. Here now our hope is erected, and the wordes of Christ are comfortable to a man, when he sayth: They haue now continued with me three dayes, it now behoueth me to giue sufficient vnto them to eate. Here we may see, that all that doe sticke diligently to the word of God, are fed of God him selfe.

Wherefore let vs dearly beloued, at the last begin to beleeue, for onely diffidence and incredulitie is the mother of all sinnes & vices, which at this day reigne in all sorts of men. How commeth it to passe, that euery where, whersoeuer we turne vs, there are so many harlots and baudes, such plenty of deluders and deceiuers, so many theeues, pillers, pilerers, robbers, Simonists, as they call them, and sellers of benefices? All these diffidence toward God bringeth forth vnto vs. For such kind of men do iudge onely according to humane reason, and reason looketh vnto that which is present: but that which it seeth not, it is not able to comprehend: wherefore while it doth not repose her trust by faith in God, it is enforced to despeire, which desperation afterward causeth such naughtie and wicked men. Behold thus it goeth out of frame with vs, when we cõmit our selues to be ruled, not to faith, but to our owne reason.

Incredulitie the mother of sinne.

Moreouer, as ye haue now learned faith, so must ye also learne loue. For Christ is sette forth vnto vs in a double forme, in one, of faith, that we should not be ouer carefull: in an other, of loue, that we may learne, that as he hath care of vs, giuing vs meate, drink, apparel, & that of meere & bountiful loue, not for his owne commodities sake, or because of our merits: so also we ought to doe well to our neighbour, and that freely, onely loue mouing vs thereunto, that as Christ is to vs, so we may be to our neighbour. Hereupon now we may perceiue, that all works of Monks and Nunnes are vaine and to be vtterly disallowed, when they

Christ an example of loue.

are not directed to that end, that they may serue their neighbour, but are ordeined onely vnto this ende, that they may merit much at Gods handes by them. For the true workes of Christians, which they desire to be accepted of God, must be done so, that they tend to the profit of our neighbour, and not to this ende, that we shoulde thinke that we shall merit many thinges of God by them, they must be cheerefully and freely bestowed vpon all euen as Christ hath done, who hath spred abroad and freely bestowed his goodnes vpon all. These thinges haue I briefly spoken concerning this text, that ye may thereby learne, that God requireth this especially of vs, that we doe firmely and constantly trust in him, and that we freely doe good and be beneficiall to our neighbours, according as God hath of his meere goodnes and mercie bestowed infinite benefits and blessings vpon vs. The Prophet sayth Psal. 50: Heare O my people and I will speake, I my self will testifie vnto thee O Israell, I am the Lord, euen thy Lorde. I will not reproue thee, because of thy sacrifices, or for thy burnt offerings, for that they be not alway before me. I will take no bullocke out of thy house, nor goates out of thy foldes. For all the beastes of the forest are mine, and so are the cattell vpon a thousand hills. I know all the foules vpon the mountaines: and the wild beastes of the field are at my commaundement. If I be hungrie, I will not tell thee: for the whole world is mine, and all that is therein. Thinkest thou that I will eate bulls flesh, and drinke the blood of Goates? After the same sort he sayth vnto vs: Behold Israell, that is, thou faithfull man, I am thy God, thou art not my God, I will giue vnto thee, thou giuest nothing to me, I will not be angrie with thee, for that thou offerest not many things vnto me. For whatsoeuer is in thy stable, in thy houses, in thy court, it was all mine before, for I haue sent it thither. Whereby he briefly reproued the Iewes, who did meruelously please them selues in their sacrifices. Now because he reiecteth these sacrifices, what will he haue to supply the place of them? truely euen that which followeth in the same place: Offer vnto me praise, and thy vowes, call vpon me in the time of trouble, & I will heare thee, and thou shalt glorifie me. That is, I will haue thine hart, giue ouer thy self to me, & account me for a gentle, fauourable, yea and for thy God, and it shall suffize me. Wherefore place thy faith, trust and hope in him, count him for a gentle and louing

louing God, cleaue vnto him, and in extreme anguish flie vnto him for succour, and to none beside him. Beleeue and looke for helpe of him, then he will helpe thee, thou needest not any whit dout. Afterward doe good to thy neighbour with a cheereful hart and freely. These two things are set forth in this our text, as also in many other places beside.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, WHEREIN IS DECLARED HOWE GRIEVOVSLY GOD PVNISHETH THE CONTEMNERS of his word.

Luke 19.

Verse 41. AND when he was come neare to Ieruſalem, he beheld the city, and wept for it,

42. Saying, If thou hadſt euē knowne at the leaſt in this thy day thoſe thinges which belonge vnto thy peace, thou wouldeſt take heede: but now are they hid from thyne eyes.

43. For the dayes ſhal come vpon thee, that thine enemies ſhal caſt a trench about thee, & compaſſe thee round, and keepe thee in on euery ſide,

44. And ſhall make thee euen with the ground, & thy children which are in thee, and they ſhall not leaue in thee a ſtone vpon a ſtone, becauſe

thou kneweſt not that ſeaſon of thy viſitation.

45. He went alſo into the temple, and began to caſt out them that ſold therein, and them that bought,

46. Saying vnto them, it is written: Mine houſe is the houſe of prayer, but ye haue made it a denne of theeues.

47. And he taught daily in the temple. And the high Prieſtes and the Scribes, and the chiefe of the people ſought to deſtroy him.

48. But they could not find what they might doe to him, for all the people hanged vpon him when they heard him.

THE ſumme and ſcope of this text is this: The Lord is troubled and lamenteth for the euils which were to come vpon the contemners of the worde of God. Ye haue often times heard, what the word of God is, what is the frute and commoditie thereof, alſo what Diſciples it hath, of which nothing is here done, or ſayd: but the puniſhment and miſerie onely is ſhewed, which was to come vpon the Iewes, for that they knew not the time of their viſitation. Which thing let vs well conſider of, for it pertaineth vnto vs alſo. If they be puniſhed which know not ỳ time of their viſitation, what ſhal come vnto them, which perſecute, blaſpheme and reprehend the Goſpell and Word of God? howbeit he ſpeaketh here onely of them which know not the ſeaſon of their viſitation. The contemners of God are preached againſt after two ſortes: firſt by threatnings, as Chriſt threatneth them Matth. 11: VVo be to thee, Corazin: VVo be to thee Bethſaida: for if the great works which vvere done in you, had bene done in Tyrus and Sidon, they had repented long agone in ſackecloth and ashes. But I ſay to you, it ſhall be eaſier for Tyrus and Sydon at the day of iudgement, then for you. And thou, Capernaum (which was his owne citie, wherein chiefly he wrought miracles) vvhich att lifted vp vnto heauen, ſhalt be brought dovvne to hell: for if the great vvorkes vvhich haue bene done in thee, had

Two wayes to preach againſt the contemners of Gods word.

had bene done among them of Sodom, they had remained to this day. But I say vnto you, that it shall be easier for them of the land of Sodom in the day of iudgement, then for you. These are the threatnings wherewith he terrifieth them, that they shoulde not so neglect the word of God. The other way the Lorde here sheweth, when as he shedeth teares, and is touched with pitie toward miserable and blind men, he doth not terrifie or threaten them, as being indurate and obstinat, but is rather wholy moued with loue and taketh pitie on his enemies, and would willingly call them backe, but that he could preuaile nothing with them, & the meanes which he vsed to reclaime them were in vaine. Before in Matthew, whereas he sharply rebuketh them, he dealeth not by loue, but by rigour, but here is pure loue and pitie, as we shall afterwards see.

First, when he drew neare to the citie, some went before him, and some followed him, with great ioy singing and saying: Hosanna the sonne of Dauid, they spred their garments in the way, they cut downe branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way, and all thinges were done after a goodly maner, but in the middest of this ioy Christ beginneth greatly to weepe, he suffreth all to reioyce, notwithstanding his eyes gushed out with teares, when he beheld the citie, and sayd: If thou haddest euen knowne at the least in this thy day those things vvhich belonge vnto thy peace, thou vvouldest take heede: but novve are they hid from thine eyes. As if the Lorde should say: O, if thou knewest what belongeth vnto thy peace that thou mightest not be destroyed, but stand still, thou wouldest yet at this day consider of it and beware. Now it were time for thee to know that which should be best for thee, but thou art blinde, & wilt neglect the time, then shall there be no place neither for helpe nor counsell. As if he sayd: Thou standest here adorned with sumptuous and goodly buildings, and there are in thee mighty citizens, which are both secure and merie, thinking that no daunger hangeth ouer them, but after the space of forty yeares thou shalt be destroyed. Which the Lorde plainly foretelleth in these wordes. Christ lamenteth for Ierusalem.

The dayes shall come vpon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compasse thee round, and keepe thee in on euery side, and shall make thee euen vvith the ground, and thy children vvhich are in thee, and they shall not leaue in thee

a ſtone vpon a ſtone, becauſe thou knewyeſt not that ſeaſon of thy viſitation. Now the Iewes, as they ſuppoſed, ſtoode vnmoueable & ſafe, reſting vpon the promiſe of God, ſo that they thought no otherwiſe, but that they ſhould perſeuerantly continue ſo for euer, they were ſecure and thought thus with them ſelues: God will not ſend ſuch thinges vnto vs: we haue the temple, wherein God him ſelfe is reſident. We haue alſo plenty of excellent men, money, and other thinges, Woe to then, who can doe any hurt or harme to vs? Howeuer the Emperour and people of Rome hauing taken the citie, ſeeing it furniſhed with ſo many and ſo great munitions and goodly and excellent buildings, merueiled greatly, and confeſſed, that it was vnpoſſible that ſo great a citie ſhould be taken, vnleſſe it had bene the ſpeciall will of God. Their boaſting therefore, and confidence in their owne falſe opinion deceiued them. Howbeit the Lord did more earneſtly and deepely conſider the matter then they, when he ſayd: O Ieruſalem, if thou kneweſt thoſe thinges that are knowne to me, thou wouldeſt haue a care of thy peace (peace in the Scriptures is, when the matters and affaires of any haue good ſucceſſe) thou thinkeſt that thou haſt glad and merie dayes, that it is well with thee, and that thy affaires are in a proſperous ſtate: but if thou kneweſt howe thine enemies ſhall by ſiege afflict thee, keepe thee in on euery ſide, and bring thee into ſuch diſtreſſe, that they ſhall make thee euen with the ground, deſtroy all thy buildings, and leaue not a ſtone vpon a ſtone, thou wouldeſt ſurely conueniently receiue the word, whereby thou mighteſt enioy both true peace, and all good thinges. The reading of the hiſtorie of the deſtruction of this city doth make much to the right vnderſtanding of this text.

The careles ſecuritie of the Iewes.

God had plainly ſo ordained, that at the feaſt of Eaſter, at which time they came to Ieruſalem out of all quarters, the citie ſhould be beſieged, and there were then gathered togither, as Ioſephus reporteth, about thirty hundred thouſand mē, vpon whom the Lorde would ſhewe his grieuous indignation and wrath. All the Apoſtles and Chriſtians were departed and gone into the cuntrie of Herod, not farre from Ieruſalem. The Lord tooke out the wheate, and put the chaffe togither on an heape, nowe there was ſo great a multitude of people, that they might ſeeme to exceede not onely a citie, but euen a kingdom. And they were driuen into ſo great calamitie, that all their vittells were ſpent, and none

A deſcription of Gods wrath and moſt grieuous vengeance poured vpon the Iewes for their contēpt and diſobedience.

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at all left vnto them, so that they were constrained to eate ꝑ strings of their bowes, & olde shoes, dressing them in such maner as they could, yea through the exceeding famine, they were driuen to kil their owne children: the souldiers tooke the flesh of children rosted from the mothers, smelling the sauour of the rosted flesh two streetes of: pigeons dunge was vnto them in steede of salte, and was also very deare: finally there was so great miserie, so great slaughter and shedding of blood, that it would not haue bene meruell for a stone to haue bene moued with pitie. He that had seene it, would haue thought that God could not haue bene so grieuously angry, and so greatly haue afflicted a people. Both houses and streets were filled with carkases dead through famine. Notwithstanding the Iewes remained stil so obstinate and without vnderstanding, that they glozied of God, and would not yeelde them selues vntil the Emperour set vpon them with his whole power, and tooke the citie, which they were able to keepe no lenger. And when as some of them were so craftie that they deuoured golde ꝑ it might not be take̅ from them, the Romane souldiers thought that they had all so done, whereupon they slewe about two thousand, and hauing ript their bellies sought for golde. There was such a slaughter & manquelling made, that it seemed a miserable thing euen to the Gentiles, wherefore Cesar commaunded that they should not be so slaine, but led captiue and sould. The Iewes were then sould so cheape, that thirty were bought for a penny, they were then dispersed through the whole world, and were coũted the most abiect people of all other, as also at this day they are the most contemptible nation in the earth. For they liue spred here and there, without cities and cuntries of their owne, neither can they be againe gathered togither into one place, so that they shall neuer be able any more to erect their Priesthood and kingdom, as they hope they shall.

Thus God reuenged the death of Christ, & all the Prophets, thus were they recompensed for that they knewe not the time of their visitation. Wherfore let vs be here admonished, for it belongeth not onely vnto vs, but euen vnto all Germanie. It is no iesting matter or spore, neither is there any cause why we should perswade our selues that it will fall out otherwise with vs. The Iewes would not beleeue that euill should come vpon them, vntil they had sufficiently tried it. And we at this day are visited by the

The example of the Iewes ought to admonish and moue other to know the time of their visitation.

benefite of God: he hath opened vnto vs a treasure, his sacred and holy Gospell, whereby we know his will, and see how much we were subiect to the power of Satan: but no man wil receiue this Gospell, yea we contemne it, and that which is more miserable, we persecute and blaspheme it. God is patient: it pleaseth him to trie vs a while: if we be not watchfull, so that the word be againe taken from vs, the same wrath and indignation which was poured forth vpon the Iewes, shal also be poured forth vpon vs. For there is the same Word, the same God, the same Christ at this day, that there was at that time, whereupon vndoutedly the punishment shal be the same, or at the least as grieuous both in soule and body.

We make almost a spoyt & trifling matter of the Gospel. For no man embraceth it from his hart, no man frameth his maners according vnto it. Which is a manifest argument of blindnes. O thing surely most miserable. I feare lest the matter will shortly come to that passe, that all Germanie will fall togither vpon an heape, which (alas) in part of the communaltie hath already had a lamētable beginning, we haue lost a great multitude of people, almost an hundred thousand men haue bene slaine onely betwene the feasts of Easter and Whitsontide. It is a hard worke of God, and I feare me the warre begon is not yet at an ende, this is onely a forewarning and threatning wherby God would terrifie vs, that we might diligently take heede to our selues: it was nothing but the Fores taple, if he come againe with his whippe, he will scourge vs more grieuously. But we will behaue our selues as the Iewes behaued them selues, vntill there shall be place for no succour nor helpe. Now we might preuent it, now were the time to knowe what shoulde be best for vs, and to receiue the Gospell with peace, for at this day grace is offered vnto vs, whereby we may liue peaceably, but we suffer day to passe after day, yeare after yeare, applying our selues lesse to the Gospel then before. No man doth now pray vnto God for ỹ increase of his word, no man receiueth it in his hart. If so be that the time shall passe, no prayers shal any more helpe. We wey not this matter in our hart, we thinke our selues safe, we do not throughly perceiue the great miserie already come to passe, neither doe we consider in our minds, how miserably God punisheth vs with false prophets and sects, which he on euery side sendeth vnto vs, which preach so securely,

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as if they had wholy receiued into their breast the spirit the comforter. Those which we counted best of all doe goe away, & bring men into such a perplexity, that they almost know not either what is to be done or not to be done. But this is onely the beginning, albeit sufficient horrible and cruell. For there can not be greater affliction and miserie, then if the Lord send amongst vs sects and false prophets, which are so rash and bold, that it is greatly to be lamented.

Notwithstanding the time of grace is nowe present: Christ hath bene sent downe into the world, hath bene borne man, hath serued vs, died for vs, is risen againe from the dead, hath sent vnto vs the spirit the comforter, hath giuen vnto vs his word, hath opened heauen so wide, that al good things may be obtained of vs, moreouer hath giuen vnto vs rich promises, whereby he promiseth that he wil preserue vs both in this short and fraile time, and in the eternal times, in this life, and in the life to come, most plentifully pouring forth his grace vpon vs. Wherefore the time of grace is now before our doores, but we despise & neglect it, which God neither will, neither can pardon. For when as we contemne his word he threatneth punishmēt, and will at the last punish vs, although he should deferre it euen an hundred yeares, but he will not deferre it so long. And the more purely that the word is preached, so much greater shal the punishment be. But I feare greatly lest this punishment require the subuersion of all Germanie. God graunt that in this thing I be a false prophet, but I feare exceedingly that it wil come to passe. God can not leaue this wickednes vnreuenged, neither will he deferre long, for the Gospell is so aboundantly preached, that it was not so manifest euen in the Apostles time as it is at this day, thankes be to Christ therefore. Wherefore I feare much lest that all Germanie be spoyled, yea and quite destroyed, vnlesse we otherwise apply our selues to this matter. We which haue long heard the Gospell, ought to pray God from the hart, that he would giue vs longer peace. The Princes goe about to bring all thinges to passe by ỹ sword, whereby they goe too rashly and rigourously to worke. Wherefore it is exceeding needefull, that we should pray vnto God, that his Gospell may spred farther abroad through Germanie, euen vnto them which haue not yet heard it. For if punishment come sodainly vpon vs, our case shall be miserable, then many soules

God will not suffer the contempt of his grace and word to be vnpunished.

shall be in daunger to be lost before the worde shall come vnto them. I woulde wish therefore, that we woulde not so cruelly despise the Gospell, that precious treasure, not onely for our owne sake, but also for their sakes which are as yet to heare it. A scourge is a litle begon: God graunt that it may so stay, that neither the Princes nor the communaltie be stirred vp to greater rage and furie. For if that ciuill warre shoulde begin againe, it were to be feared that it would haue none ende.

We doe like as the Iewes did, who had a greater care of the belly then of God, hauing more regard how to fill the belly, then that they might be saued, wherefore they lost both, and that worthely. For, forasmuch as they would not receiue life, God sent vnto them death, so they lost both body and soule. They pretended the same cause that we do. We would willingly in deede embrace the Gospell, if there were no daunger of body and goods, wife, & children. If we shall beleeue him, sayd the Iewes, the Romanes wil come, and take away both our place and the nation, which neuertheles came vnto them, for that which ỹ wicked man feareth, falleth vpon him. This was a lette and hinderance to the Iewes that they would not beleeue the wordes of God, neither haue regard to the rich and large promises that he had made vnto them. So also doe we, we regard not the mighty and comfortable promises which Christ hath made vnto vs, as where he sayth: He shall receiue an hundreth fold more, and shal inherit euerlasting life. Leaue thy wife and children, I will preserue them, I will restore them, so as thou goest to worke boldly in my name. Thinkest thou that I can not build thee other houses? countest thou me so simple, who will giue vnto thee heauen? wilt thou not put thy self in daunger for my sake? if thy goods be taken from thee, it is wel with thee, heauen and earth are mine, I will recompence thee aboundantly. These and such like sayings we passe ouer, yea and also contemne, hauing diligent consideration only what we haue layd vp in our chest, and that our purse may be full, neither doe we see, that euen that which we haue God hath giuen vnto vs, & will as yet giue vs more, if we beleeue and trust in him, neither doe we marke if that we lose God, we shall lose the belly also.

Matth. 19. 29

The faithful refuse not to suffer perill

Howbeit they that beleeue in God, doe not auoide perill if it come for his sake, but commit all things to his diuine power, that he may order them according to his will, and thus they thinke:

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The Lord hath giuen me both a house and the furniture thereof, wife, children, &c. I haue not obtained them of my self, forasmuch then as they are Gods, I will commit them vnto him, he shal best preserue them. For euen otherwise I must leaue them, wherfore I will refuse to suffer no perill, and to leaue whatsoeuer I haue for his sake, if the case so require. If he will haue me so to doe, he can giue me other thinges, for he hath promised that he will giue sufficient to them that beleeue, both here and in the time to come. If he will not haue me to liue here, I owe death vnto him, when he shall require me, I will be ready for his wordes sake. He that shall not doe thus, denieth God, and is notwithstanding compelled to lose both this fraile life, and eternall life. The stinking belly which we make our god, is the cause, that we doe not cleaue to the word of God: for I will first be certaine howe I may feede my selfe, and where my goods be. The Gospell sayth, Trust in God, but I prouide for my belly, and if I haue one noble in gold, I thinke I haue sufficient to sustaine & nourish me for ten dates, & trusting vnto that which I haue layd vp, I trust not in God, that as he hath hitherto fedde me, so he will nourish me still. Is not this a detestable thinge, that I trust to one peece of coyne onely, whereby I looke to haue my foode and sustenance to morrow? Fy, what a cursed thing is such care for the belly? Shall a vile peece of coyne be more esteemed of me, then God him selfe, in whose power are heauen and earth, who giueth vnto vs ayer and water, maketh graine to growe vnto vs, and sendeth all thinges necessary? It is more detestable then that it can be expressed by the voice of man, that God is not esteemed of vs so much as a litle money. Why doost thou not thinke: God who hath made me, will well nourish me, if he will haue me liue. If he will not, well, then shall I haue no neede. But, sayth the belly, I finde no god in my chest. Thou foolish asse, who can assure thee that thou shalt liue till to morrow? It is vncertaine whether thou shalt keepe thy belly till to morrow, and desirest thou to know where foode and sustenance is? If this did pearse our hart, we should see how deuilish a thing incredulitie is. Is it not a horrible thing that I doe not make so greate account of God, who feedeth so many mouthes, as to trust in him, that he will nourish me, yea that I do make more account of one noble in golde then of God him selfe, who poureth forth his good things so abundantly? The wold

and trouble for God his sake.

Immoderate care for the belly the cause of diffidence and distrust of Gods care & prouidence.

is full of the blessings and workes of God, he is on euery side with his good thinges, notwithstanding we doe not yet commit our selues to him, or receiue his visitatiō. O cursed world, which can not trust to God euen one day, and yet trusteth to a peece of gold. Thus we see, as I thinke, of what sort the world is, how it despiseth God for the bellies sake, which notwithstanding it is compelled to lose. O how great contemners of saluation are we? we ought rather to detest the world, but we are too deepely drowned in olde Adam. The world is as it were a figure of hell, yea a very deuilish kingdom, & an entrance to hell. Wherefore Christ with weeping eyes exhorteth vs to knowe our saluation, and to receiue his visitation, lest that a plague & scourge follow, which undoutedly shall come vpon them, which thinking them selues in safetie, doe not beleeue and trust in God. God giue vs his grace, whereby we may knowe him. It followeth moreouer in the text.

He went also into the temple, and beganne to cast out them that soulde therein, and them that bought, saying vnto them, it is written, Mine house is the house of prayer, but ye haue made it a denne of theeues. This is the second part of this text, wherein is declared how the Lord going into the temple, beginneth to driue out the byers and sellers therein. The former part was nothing else but an exhortation and inuiting to faith, but here the Lorde insinuateth what the temple of God is, and bringeth a place out of the Scripture hereunto appertaining, namely out of Esai. where he sayth: Myne house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. This is a stronge saying, whereas the Prophet sayth, for all people, against the Iewes, who trusting vnto that temple at Ierusalē, thought that this house made with hand, should continue for euer, supposing it to be impossible, that God would either destroy this temple, or leaue the citie desolate, because the word of God can not lye. Wherefore they stoned Steuen, for that he spake against that holy citie, and affirmed that Iesus woulde destroy it, and chaunge the ceremonies giuen of Moses. For they sayd: The Prophets haue greatly praysed this house: and doe you Apostles preache that it shall be destroyed? Howbeit this saying is thus to be vnderstood, that the citie Ierusalem, the Temple, and the People should continue vntill the time of Christ, whereunto all the Prophets tend, which referred

Esai.56.7.

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all thinges vnto Christ, that as he should doe, so it should be, and so it should continue. Wherefore the place of Esai extendeth no farther then to the comming of Christ, which all the Prophets also witnes, affirming that there should come a kingdom, which should extend farre and wide ouer the whole worlde, as it is in Malachie: From the rising of the sunne vnto the going downe of the same, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in euery place incense shall be offered to my name, and a pure offering: for my name is great among the very Heathen, sayth the Lorde of hostes. *Mal. 1. 11.*

Here the Prophet speaketh of the spirituall kingdom of Christ, who would builde vnto him selfe an house of prayer in the whole worlde. It is true that God him selfe did confirme and sanctifie the temple at Ierusalem, not because it was furnished with precious stones and goodly buildings, or halowed of the Priestes, which maner of trifles and dotages we vse at this day, but because he had consecrated and halowed it with his worde, when he sayd: This house is my house: for his word was preached in it. Wheresoeuer the worde of God is preached, there is his true house: where the worde of God hath his course and proceeding, there vndoutedly God dwelleth with his grace: where his Gospell is, there is the holy house of prayer, there prayers both may and ought to be made vnto God. God also will heare vs, as Christ sayth Ioh. 16: VVhatsoeuer ye shall aske the Father in my name, he will giue it you: hitherto haue ye asked nothing in my name: aske, & ye shal receiue. Contrariwise, where the word is not, there is Satan wholy. Now, whereas we imitating the Iewes haue builded so many temples, it were tolerable, if we had therefore so done, that the word of God might be preached in them, for where Gods word is preached, there is he present, and poureth forth his grace. The true house of God.

Christ sayth moreouer that the Iewes haue made the temple at Ierusalem a denne of theeues. But they were resident in the temple which sould oxen and sheepe, that they which came might buy to offer and worship God: Why therefore doth he call it a dēne of theeues? Surely he giueth vnto it a foule name, which came to passe vpon this occasion: for that it was not any more counted of them for the house of God, but for a house of marchandize, that is, the Priestes had no care how the word of God was preached there, and did negligently and carelesly singe, bable, and Why Christ calleth the temple at Ierusalem a denne of theeues.

reade Moses and the Prophets. But God doth nothing esteeme that mumbling vp of many wordes, which is onely vaine and childish. They behaued them selues like as our sacrificing Priestes and Munkes doe, who of temples & Monasteries making denns of theeues, preach popishfull doctrine, and therefore onely they celebrate Masse, that they may thereby get vnto them selues money, and fill the belly, killing & destroying silly sheepe with their traditions. Which is the denne, wherein soules are slayne, which title is to be giuen to al temples, wherein the word of God is not preached. For there they mocke God, kill soules, expell the true word, and set vp theeuerie. O how fowly haue we bene deceiued in this point? But God at this day is highly to be prayed, that his word reneth & quickneth vs, driueth away theeues, & teacheth vs to pray aright. For a sincere Christian must pray not in mouth onely, but in hart also. Thus we haue ỳ second part of our text, how Christ casteth out the sellers, that is them ỳ serued the belly, and maketh place for his worde. It were very good if Monasteries were scoured after this sort, ỳ either Christian scholes, or places wherein the word of God might be preached, might be made of them: which if it come not to passe, they are, and doe remaine dennes of theeues. If Christ calleth his house a denne of theeues, how much more shall our temples, which God hath not consecrated, be proued to be dennes of theeues?

I haue often times desired you, that ye would deuoutly pray vnto God, that he turning away his indignation, would bridle the deuill, who now rageth in the world. For ye haue heard of a great calamitie, how many thousand haue bene slayne, it is to be feared that they are all damned. God requireth obedience of vs, & he hath pronounced the sentence, that he that taketh the sword, shall perish with the sword. They were besieged of Satan, who knoweth whether the same shall come vnto vs? Let vs pray God therefore that his kingdom may come vnto vs, that Christians may be multiplied, and that he will send wise and meeke Preachers, whom the people may receiue and obey. Let him that knoweth the gift of God, pray for others which haue not yet heard the word of God. For it is hie time so to doe,

A

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, WHEREIN IS ENTREATED OF THE LAWE AND THE GOSPELL, AND OF THE DIFFERENCE betwene them.

Luke 10.

Verse 23. AND he turned to his Disciples and sayd secretly, Blessed are the eyes, which see that ye see.

24. For I tel you that many Prophets and Kinges haue desired to see those thinges, which ye see, and haue not seene them: and to heare those thinges which ye heare, and haue not heard them.

25. Then behold, a certaine Lawyer stoode vp & tempted him, saying, Maister, what shall I doe to inherit eternall life?

26. And he sayd vnto him: What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27. And he aunswered and sayd, Thou shalt loue thy Lord God with all thine hart, and with all thy soule, & with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thy selfe.

28. Then he sayd vnto him: Thou hast aunswered right: this doe, and thou shalt liue.

29. But he willing to iustifie him selfe, sayd vnto Iesus, Who is then my neighbour?

30. And Iesus aunswered & sayd: A certaine man went downe from Hierusalem to Ierico, & fell

amõg theeues,& they robbed hĩ of his raimẽt, & woũded hĩ,& departed,leauing hĩ half dead.

31. Nowe so it fell out, that there came downe a certaine Prieſt that ſame way,and when he ſaw him,he paſſed by on the other ſide.

32. And likewiſe alſo a Leuite when he was come neare to the place,went and looked on him, & paſſed by on the other ſide.

33. Thẽ a certain Samaritan, as he iornied, came neare vnto him, and when he ſaw him,he had compaſſion on him.

34. And went to him,and bound vp his woundes, and poured in oyle and wine, and put him on his owne beaſt,and brought him to an Inne, & made prouiſion for him.

35. And on the morrowe when he departed, he tooke out two pence,& gaue them to the hoſt, and ſaid vnto him,Take care of him,and whatſoeuer thou ſpendeſt more,whẽ I come again, I will recompence thee.

36. Which now of theſe three,thinkeſt thou, was neighbour vnto him that fel amõg the theues?

37. And he ſaid,He that ſhewed mercy on hĩ,Thẽ ſayd Ieſus vnto him;Go,and do thou likewiſe.

I Hope well that ye doe nowe rightly vnderſtande this Goſpell, forasmuch as it is preached of euery yeare: notwithſtanding becauſe occaſion is now againe offered, we muſt againe entreat and preach of it. Firſt the Euangeliſt ſayth, that Chriſt tooke his Diſciples aſide, and ſayd vnto them ſecretly after this ſort: Bleſſed are the eyes which ſee that ye ſee. For I tell you that many Prophets and Kinges haue deſired to ſee thoſe thinges which ye ſee,and haue not ſeene them, and to heare thoſe things which ye heare, and haue not heard them. To ſee and heare is to be vnderſtoode here ſimply of the outward ſeeing and hearing, to

wit,

wit, that they sawe Christ come in the flesh, heard his sermons, and were present at those miracles which he did among the Iewes. The Iewes sawe the same accoyding to the flesh, yea and felt them also: yet did they not truely acknowledge him for Christ, as the Apostles did, and especially Peter in the name of all the rest did confes him, saying: Thou art Christ the Sonne of the liuing God. We graunt in deede, that there were some among the Iewes, which acknowledged him, as the Apostles did, but the number of them was very small, wherefore he taketh his Apostles here seuerally vnto himselfe. Many Prophets and Kings haue seene Christ, howbeit in the spirit, as the Lord himselfe sayth to the Iewes of Abraham, Ioh. 8: Your father Abraham reioyced to see my daye, and he saw it, and was glad. The Iewes thought then that he had spoken of the bodely seeing, but he spake of the spirituall seeing, whereby all Christian heartes did behold him, before he was borne. For if Abraham sawe him, vndoutedly many other of the Prophets, in whom ỹ holy Ghost was, saw him also. And although this seeing saued the holy Fathers and Prophets, yet did they alwayes with most inward and heartie affection desire to see Christ in the flesh also, as is commonly shewed in the Prophets. Wherefore the Lord sayth here vnto his disciples, which sawe him both in the flesh, and in the spirit: Blessed are the eyes which see those thinges that ye see. As if he said: Now is the acceptable yeare and time of grace: The matter which is now in hand is so weightie and precious, that ỹ eyes are worthely said to be blessed, which see it. For now was the Gospell preached openly and manifestly both by Christ himselfe, and also by his Apostles, whereupon he here calleth them all blessed, which see and heare such grace. Of which grace I haue preached much & a long time vnto you, I would to God ye did keepe that which I haue spoken thereof, fresh in memorie.

How ỹ faithful saw Christ before his incarnation.

When the Lord spake these thinges, a certaine Lawyer start vp, shewing himselfe as though he had bin some thing, who tempting the Lord sayth: Maister, what shall I do to inherit eternall life? This lawer was endued with wisedome, and not vnskilfull of the Scriptures, which euen his aunswere doth declare, yet in this place he is proued a foole, yea he is brought vnto shame and ignominie. For Christ taketh awaye all his glorying euen in one worde. He was of this mynde, that he had obserued the whole

Lawe, and that he was a certaine chiefe one in respect of other, as vndoutedly he was, and thought himselfe sufficient worthy by reason of his godlines and learning to be conuersaunt with the Lord. But what doth the Lord in this case? the text folowing declareth.

And he said vnto him, what is written in the Lawe? how readest thou? And he aunswered and said: Thou shalt loue thy Lord God with all thine heart, and with all thy soule, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mynde, and thy neighbour as thy selfe. Then he said vnto him, Thou hast aunswered right: do this, & thou shalt liue. We thinkes that the Lord gaue this good mā a hard lesson: he dealeth verie straitly with him, it may seeme to some that he should haue spared him a litle, he putteth him to shame opēly before all: he proueth that he had done nothing, who notwithstanding thought that he had done all thinges. He asked what he should do: but I thinke he had enough and ouermuch to do, if he had bin able to do more then he was. If I had time, manie things might be spoken of these two commaundements. For they are the chiefe and greatest commaundements in Moses, on which the whole Lawe, and all the Prophets do hang, as Christ himselfe sayth in Matthew: Notwithstanding we will entreat somewhat of them. If we consider all the commaundements of Moses, they haue respect altogether vnto loue. For this commaundement: Thou shall haue none other gods in my sight, we can no otherwise declare or interpret, then, Thou shalt loue God alone, so Moses expoundeth it in Deuteronomie, where he sayth thus: Heare O Israell, the Lord our God is Lord onely. And thou shalt loue the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soule, and with all thy might: from whence the Lawer tooke his aunswere. But the Iewes vnderstand this commaundement so, that they thinke it to extend no further, then that they should not set vp, nor worship idols. And if they can say and witnes in mouth, that they haue one God onely, and do worship none but him, they thinke they haue obserued this commaundement. After the same sort did this Lawer vnderstand it, but that was an euell and a wrong vnderstand thereof.

Matth. 22. 40.

Deut. 6. 4. 5.

How the first cōmaundement is to be

Howbeit we must otherwise consider & vnderstād this precept: Thou shalt haue none other gods in my sight. Thou, it sayth, with all that thou art, but especially it requireth all thine heart, soule,

soule and strength. It speaketh not of the toung, not of the hand, not of the knees, but of the whole man, what soeuer thou art and hast. That no other God may be worshipped of me, it shalbe necessary that I haue the true and only God in myne heart, that is, I must loue him frō myne heart, so that I do alwayes depend on on him, trust in him, repose my hope in him, haue my pleasure, loue and ioy in him, and daily remember him. Euen as otherwise, if we take pleasure of any thinge, we say, it doth me good inwardly at the heart. And if any speaketh or laugheth, and doth it not in good earnest, neither from his heart, we are wont to say: Thou laugheste in deede, but it cōmeth not from thine heart. The loue of the heart in the Scriptures signifieth a behement & speciall loue, which we ought to beare toward God. They which serue God with mouth, hands, and knees onely, are hypocrites, neither hath God any care of them. For God will not haue part, but the whole. The Iewes did outwardly abstaine from idolatrie, and serued God alone in mouth, but their heart was farre remoued from him, being full of diffidence and vnbeleefe. Outward they seemed to be verie earnest in seruing God, but within they were full of idolatrie. Whereupon the Lord said vnto them Matth. 23: VVoe be to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like vnto painted sepulchers, which appeare beautifull outward, but are within full of dead mens bones, and of all filthines. So are ye also: For outward ye appeare righteous vnto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisie and iniquitie. vnderstood and obserued.

These are those wicked ones, which glorie of the outward thinge, which go about to iustifie and make themselues good by their owne workes, after the maner of this Lawer. Consider how great the pride of this asse was, he commeth forth as though he could not be blamed or rebuked of the Lord, he thought, yea it seemed vnto him, that the Lord would here commend and praise his life before the people. He thought not to learne any thing of the Lord, but he sought onely his owne commendation, he would willingly haue had Christ to set forth his praise, toward whom the eyes of all were bent, and who was an admiration to all. So all hypocrites do, outwardly they pretend excellent, great and weightie workes: they say that they haue respect neither of glorie nor praise, but within in their heart they are full of ambition, and wish that their holines were knowen to the whole world, The qualitie of hypocrites.

shewing a goodly signe of their religion, by the byting of their lippe, if they heare any speake thereof. But our Sauiour Christ sheweth here no kyndnes or gentlenes to this Lawyer, inasmuch as he putteth him to shame: that great holy man notwithstanding continueth still in the same mynde, and supposeth that he shall receiue great honour, & singular praise because of his precious life, thinking that he had fulfilled the commaundement, whereupon also he looketh for a ioyfull aunswere, that the Lord should say: Good maister, your maistership hath done all thinges. But Christ aunswereth him: Do this. Which in deede is as much to say as: Thou art altogether a naughtie felowe, thou hast neuer in all thy life fulfilled so much as one letter thereof, so shewing vnto him how euell and naughtie he was.

How God must be loued of vs.

Like vnto this Lawyer are all they which do most grieuously offend against the first commaundement, and thinke that God is to be loued no more then the wordes sound for, and that thereby it is fulfilled: the commaundement therefore remaineth in their mouth, and doth as it were flote aboue the heart, and pearseth it not: but I must go much farther then so, I must loue God so, that I can be content to forsake all creatures for his sake, and if it shall seeme good vnto him, my body and life, I must loue him aboue all things, for he is ielous, and can not suffer that any thing be loued aboue him, but vnder him he permitteth vs to loue any thinge. Euen as the husband can suffer, that his wife loue her maydes, the house, houshold thinges, cattel, and such like, howbeit he suffereth her not to loue any with that loue wherewith she is bound vnto him, but himselfe, yea he will haue her leaue all such thinges for his sake. Againe the wife requireth the same of her husband. After the same sort God can suffer that we loue his creatures, yea therefore they are created, & are good. The sunne is a goodly creature, gold and siluer, and whatsoeuer by nature is faire, procureth vs to loue it, which maketh it deare vnto vs, neither is God offended thereat. But that I should cleaue vnto the creature, and loue it equally with him, that neither will he, neither can he suffer: yea he will haue me both to deny and forsake all these thinges, when he requireth it of me, and will haue me content, although I neuer see the sunne, money, riches, &c: The loue of creatures must be farre inferiour to the loue which we must beare toward him. As he is the soueraigne good, so

will

will he also be chiefly loued before all other good thinges, If he will not suffer that I shall loue any thing equally with him much lesse will he suffer that I shall loue any thing aboue him.

Thou seest now as I thinke, what it is to loue God with all the heart, with all the soule, with all the mynde. To loue God with all the heart, is to loue God aboue all creatures, that is, although creatures be verie amiable and deare vnto me, and I take great delight in them, yet must I so loue them, that I do contemne and forsake them, when my God and Lord requireth that of me. What it is to loue God with all the heart.

To loue God with all the soule, is to bestow our whole life & body at his pleasure, as if the loue of creatures or any tentation assaile thee, or would ouercome thee, thou mayst say: I will rather part from all these then I will forsake my God, whether he cast me of, either kill me, either drowne me, or whatsoeuer through his permission shall come vnto me, I had rather leaue all thinges then him, I will depend on that my Lord, rather then vpon all creatures, or vpon any other thing whatsoeuer it be. Whatsoeuer I haue and am, I will bestow, but him will I not forsake. The soule in the Scriptures signifieth the life of the body, & whatsoeuer is done by the fiue senses, as to eate, to drinke, to sleepe, to wake, to see, to heare, to smell, to taste, and whatsoeuer the soule worketh by the bodye. To loue God with all the strength, is for Gods cause to renounce all the members and limmes of the body, so that one will offer to perill whatsoeuer he is able in his flesh and body, before he will commit that which is against God. To loue God with all the minde, is to enterprise nothing but that which may please God, whereby he vnderstãdeth the thought, which is in man, that that also be referred to God, and to all thinges that be acceptable vnto him. Thou perceiuest now what this commaundement of God containeth in it. Thou shalt loue God, Thou, Thou sayth he, and that wholy, euen euerie part of thee, not thy handes, not thy mouth, not thy knees alone. They which do these thinges, as it is said, do truely fulfill it: but no man liueth in the earth which doth so, yea we do all otherwise. Wherefore the law doth here make vs all sinners, so that not so much as the least iote or point thereof is fulfilled of them that are most holy of all in the world. For no man doth so cleaue with all his heart vnto God, that he can leaue all thinges What it is to loue God with all the soule. To loue God with all the strength. To loue God with all the mynde.

for his sake. We (alas) are gone so farre, that we can not suffer so much as a litle word, nay we will not forgoe the value of a halpenie for Gods cause.

We are farre of from loving God as we ought.

How can it be that we should loue God, when his will is not setled in our mynde? If I loue God, I can not but loue his will also. Now if God send sicknes, pouertie, shame, and ignominie, it is his will, whereat what do we? we murmur, we grudge, our mynde is caried hither and thither, we take it most unpatiently, and yet is this the least. What would we do, if we should leaue our body and life for God & Christ his sake? then would we shew our selues after an other sort. But in the meane season we do like unto this Pharise & Lawyer, we lead an honest life outwardly, we worship God, we serue him, we fast, we pray, and behaue our selues in outward appearaunce iustly and holily. But God doth not require that of vs, but that we should bend our selues to do his will with pleasure and loue, cheerefully & louingly. Wherefore whatsoeuer the Lord sayth here to the Lawyer, he sayth it to all vs, to wit, that we haue yet done nothing, but that all thinges do yet remaine to be done. All men therefore are giltie of death and subiect to Satan: All men are lyers, vaine, filthie, and whatsoeuer they pretend, it is nothing worth. We are wise in our owne matters, that we may scrape together money and goods, and we can speake most sweetely and fayrely before men, and cūningly propound or set forth our matter. What doth God care for these thinges? He requireth of vs that we loue him with our whole heart, which no mā liuing is able to performe, whereupon of this place is inferred, that we are all synners, but especially they, whose life hath a goodly outward shew onely. This is the former part of this text, namely, the preaching of the law: Now followeth the other part, which is the preaching of the Gospell, which declareth how we may fulfill the lawe, and from whence that fulfilling is to be taken, which we shall learne of that Samaritane.

What doth the Lawyer moreouer, after that the Lord had thus delt with him? He, saith the Euangelist, willing to iustifie himselfe, spake unto the Lord & asked him as followeth: Who is then my neighbour? He asketh not: Who is my God? As if he sayd: I owe nothing unto God, neither do I want any thing before God, yea it seemeth unto me, that I do neither owe any thing

thing to any man: neuertheles I would willingly know who is my neighbour. The Lord aunswering him, bringeth forth a most goodly similitude, whereby he declareth that we are all neighbours one to an other, as well he that giueth a benefit, as he that receiueth and needeth one: although by the text it seemeth to appeare, that he onely is a neighbour, which bestoweth a benefit vpon an other. But the Scripture maketh here no difference, sometime calling him our neighbour, which bestoweth a benefit, sometime him that receiueth a benefite. By this similitude the Lord inferreth in these wordes: Go and do thou likewise, so that that Lawyer had offended not onely against God, but also against man, and wanted not onely loue towardes God, but also loue towardes his neighbour, vnto whom he had not done that good which he ought. This wretched felow is brought into such a case that he is found wholy euell, euē from the head to the feete. How came it to passe that he being most skillfull of the Scripture could not beware of this? So fell it out: he led a pharisaicall, hypocriticall, and counterfaite life, which had not regarde vnto his neigbour, and to succour and helpe others, but sought thereby onely glorie and honour before men, and so looked by negligent & dissolute liuing to come to heauen. But ye haue heard verie often, that a Christian life consisteth in this, that we deale with faith and the heart in thinges that pertaine vnto God, but vse our life and workes towards our neighbour, and that I must not looke while my neighbour seeketh a benefite, and requireth some thing of me, but according to my duty must preuent his asking, & of myne owne accord offer my liberalitie vnto him. Now we will see what the parable containeth in it.

A Christian life.

The Samaritane in this place is without all doute our Lord Iesus Christ, who hath declared his loue toward God and men: Toward God, in that he descended from heauen, and was incarnate, and so fulfilled the will of his father: Toward men, for that byandby after baptisme, he beganne to preach, to worke miracles, to heale the sicke, neither was there any worke that he did, which did concerne himselfe onely, but all his workes were directed to his neighbour, being made our minister, when as notwithstanding he is aboue all, and equall to God: but he did all these thinges, for that he knew that they did please God, and that it was the will of his father. When he had ascended to the

The loue of Christ toward God & men.

heighth of the commaundement, that he loued God with all his heart, he left and committed the life of his body, and whatsoeuer he had to the pleasure and will of his father saying: Father, behold all thinges that I haue, my life and soule are readie at thy will: I leaue for thy sake the glorie and honour which I haue had among men, yea and all thinges how good soeuer they be, that the world may vnderstand how greatly I loue thee: My father let for thy sake my wisedome be contemned, that the worlde may count me for the foolishest of all: Now make I my selfe most cõtemptible of all other, who was before praised of ꝑ whole world: Now am I as a most wicked theefe, who before was liberall, profitable, and beneficial to the whole world: My father, I make no account of all these thinges, that I may be found obedient to thy will. This is that Samaritane, who being desired by no prayers, came, & fulfilled the law with his whole heart, he alone hath fulfilled it, which praise none can take from him: he alone hath deserued it, and to him onely it appertaineth.

The wounded man, & the theeues that spoiled him.

But whereas he is touched with care of the wounded man, hath compassion on him, byndeth vp his woundes, bringeth him with him into an Inne, prouideth for him, that pertaineth vnto vs. The man which lieth half dead, wounded, beaten, & spoiled, is Adam, yea and all we. The theeues which spoiled vs, wounded vs, and left vs halfe dead, as yet a litle pãting, are the Deuels. The horse and his sitter do here fall downe, we are not able to helpe our selues, and if we should be left lying so, we should die, through great anguish and distres, our woundes would become festred, and our affliction miserable and exceeding great. This excellent parable is set before our eyes, liuely painting forth vnto vs, what we are, what is the strength of our reason and free will. If that wretched man had gone about to helpe himselfe, his case would haue bene made worse, he would haue hurt himselfe, he would haue opened his woundes with rubbing, & so would haue fallen into greater calamitie. Againe if he had bin left lying, it had bin all one. So it commeth to passe when we are left to our selues: our studies and endeuour surely are nothing, howsoeuer we set vpon the matter. Hitherto sundrie waies & diuers meanes haue bin inuented, whereby we might come vnto heauen, and amend our life, this man found out this, an other that, whereupon haue increased innumerable sortes of Orders, letters of indulgences, pilgri-

pilgrimages to saincts, which did alwayes make ỹ state of Christianitie worse. This is the world which is painted forth in this wounded man, he being wholy laden with synnes, fainteth under so heauie a burden, and is not able to helpe him selfe.

But the Samaritane who hath fulfilled the Lawe, and is perfectly sound and whole, commeth, and doth more, then either the Priest or Leuite, he byndeth vp his woundes, poureth in oyle and wine, setteth him vpon his owne beast, bringeth him with him vnto an Inne, maketh prouision for him, and when he should depart, diligently commendeth him to the host, and leaueth with him sufficient for expenses, none of which either the Priest, or Leuite did. By the Priest the holy Fathers are signified, which flourished before Moses. The Leuite is a representation of the Priesthood of the old Testament. Now all these could do nothing by their workes, but passed by like vnto this Priest and Leuite. Wherefore although I had all the good workes of Noe, Abraham, yea and of all the faithfull Fathers, they would profit me nothing. The Priest and Leuite saw that miserable man lie wounded, but they could not helpe him any thinge: they saw him lie halfe dead, but what was that to the purpose? they could not giue him any remedy. The holy Fathers sawe men drowned and plunged in synnes euen vp to the eares, they also felt the sting and anguish of synne, but what could they doe hereunto? they could make the case worse and not better. And those were the preachers of the Lawe, which shew what the world is, namely that it is full of synne, and lieth halfe dead, and can not euen any whit helpe it selfe with his strength, reason, and free will. But Christ is that true Samaritane, who is touched with as great care of that miserable man as of himselfe. Neither doth the Samaritane call him vnto him, for he hath no merit, but enioyeth the meere grace and mercy of Christ, who byndeth vp his woundes, and hauing great care of him, poureth in oyle and wine, that is, the whole Gospell. He poureth in oyle when grace is preached, when it is sayd: beholde O miserable man, this is thy incredulitie, this is thy condemnation, thus art thou wounded and sicke: but abyde, I will shew thee a remedy for all this: Behold, ioyne thy selfe to this Samaritane Christ the Sauiour, he will best helpe and succour thee, and beside him nothing. The nature of oyle, as he know, is to make soft and mol-

The Priest & Leuite which passed by ỹ wounded mã.

Christ the true Samaritane which helpeth the wounded man.

Oyle.

liue: so the sweete and gentle preaching of the Gospell maketh my heart soft and tender toward God and my neighbour, so that I dare bestow my body and life, for Christ and his Gospell, if God and neede so require. Sharpe wine signifieth the holy crosse or affliction, which forwith followeth. Neither is there any cause that a Christian should looke farre about and seeke the crosse, for it sooner hangeth ouer his head then he is aware of, as Paul witnesseth 2. Tim. 3: All that will liue godly in Christ Iesus, shall suffer persecutiō. This is the cognisance and badge of this king. He that is ashamed of this cognisance, pertaineth not vnto him. Moreouer that Samaritane putteth this wounded man vpon his owne beast: this is our Lord Iesus Christ, who beareth vs, we lye vpon his shoulders, vpō his necke & body. There is scarce a more amiable & comfortable history in the whole Gospell, then where Christ compareth himselfe to a shepeheard, which carieth againe the lost sheepe vpon his shoulders vnto the flocke.

Wine.

The Inne whereunto ỹ wounded mā is brought, & the host to whom he is committed.

The Inne is the state of Christianitie in this worlde, wherein we must abide for a litle time. The host is the ministers & preachers of the worde of God, and of the Gospell, whose charge is to haue care of vs. This therefore is the summe: The kingdome of Christ is a kingdome of mercy and grace, where is nothing els but alwayes to be borne and to beare. Christ beareth our defects and infirmitie, he taketh our synnes vpon himselfe, and beareth our fall willingly, we daily lie vpon his necke, neither is he wearied with that bearing of vs. It is the dutie of the preachers of this kingdome, to comfort consciences, to handle them gently, to feede them with the Gospell, to beare the weake, to heale the sicke: Moreouer they ought fitly to applie the worde according to the neede of euerie one. This in deede is the dutie of a true Bishop and preacher, not to proceede by violence and iniurie, as it is the custome of our bishops at this daye, which bee, torment, and crie out: goe to, goe to, he that will not willingly, shalbe compelled to doe it against his will. We must in no wise doe so. But a Bishop or preacher ought to behaue himselfe as a healer of the sicke, who dealeth verie tenderly with them, uttereth verie louing words vnto them, talketh very gently with them, and bestoweth all his endeuour about them. The same must a Bishop, or minister of any particular parish do, and thinke no otherwise, but that his bishoprike or parish is as an

hospitall,

hospitall, wherein are such as are combred with diuerse and sundrie kyndes of diseases. If Christ be thus preached, then faith and loue come togither, which fulfill the commaundemēt of loue. Now forasmuch as the knowledge of the Lawe and the Gospel, and of the difference betweene them is verie necessarie, I will intreat of them somwhat more at large.

Of the Lawe and the Gospell.

I haue verie oftē admonished your brotherly charitie, that the whole Scripture deuideth it selfe into two parts: into the Lawe, and the Gospel. The Law is that which teacheth what we must do, what the will of God requireth of vs. The Gospell teacheth where that is to be receiued, which the Lawe cōmaundeth. Euen as if I seeke to take phisicke, it is one art to tell what the disease is, & an other to minister that which is good and wholesom to remedie it. So standeth the case here: The Lawe reuealeth the disease, the Gospell ministreth the medecine. Which is manifest euē by the text whereof we haue already intreated: The Lawyer commeth, and being verie desirous of eternall life, aſketh what he must do. The Lawe declareth it vnto him, saying: Thou shalt loue the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soule, with all thy strength, and with all thy minde, and thy neighbour as thy selfe. He that readeth these workes after a bare and slender sort onely, as this Lawyer did, vnderstandeth them not. We must pearce into the Lawe, and euerie one behold his face and heart therein. God must be loued of me from the bottom of my heart: Againe, I must loue him with all my soule, that is, from the depth of my soule, so that I throughly feele in my selfe that I loue him. For to loue with the soule signifieth in the Scripture such loue as a yong man beareth toward a mayd, which he feeleth throughly in his minde. Moreouer, with all my strength, that is, with all my members. Also with all my mynde, that is, all my senses, cogitations & thoughts must be directed vnto God: Now I finde in my selfe that I do none of these. For if I must loue God with all my heart, soule, strength and minde, it is requisite, that myne eyes shew no angrie twinckling or motiō, ỹ my toūg speak no angrie word, that my feete, handes, eares, &c. shew no signe of wrath, that my whole body euen from the crowne of the head to the soles of the feete, & all things belonging thereunto, do walke

The wlole Scripture diuided into ỹ Lawe & the Gospell.

The office of the Lawe.

in charitie, be as it were rauished with loue and pleasure toward God, & alwaies serue & worship him. Wherefore who is he which by the pleasure & loue of vertue is chast & righteous? there cā not be one such found in ỳ earth. For we alwayes finde our selues readier to wrath, hatred, enuie, worldly pleasure &c: then to meekenes & other vertues. I finde in me not onely a sparke, but euen a fierie fornace of wicked lust: for there is no loue in myne heart, no not in all my members. Wherefore here in the Lawe as it were in a certaine glasse I see whatsoeuer is in me, to be damnable and cursed. For not one iote of the Law must perish, but all must be fulfilled, as Christ saith: Truly I say vnto you, till heauē & earth passe, one iote or title of the Lawe shall not scape, till all be fulfilled. Now thou fyndest not this in thee, that thou doest with all thy soule and heart, with cheerefulnes and pleasure, whatsoeuer the Law exacteth and requireth of thee. Hereupon thou art damned and vnder the dominion of Satan.

Matth. 5. 18.

The Lawe therefore serueth vs thus farre, to teach vs, that we are condemned: for by it we fynde all wicked desyres in vs, and yet not so much as a sparke of them ought to be in vs. Howbeit our Scholemen not marking this, haue taught, that if one do according to his abilitie, God doeth giue his grace vnto him. They are blynde guides: They graunt themselues, that a man is caried with no pleasure or cheerefulnes to that which is good, and yet do they also teach, if one worketh, although it be with griefe, difficultie, and slouthfulnes, that it is well with him before God. But Christ hath taught otherwise in this place, that we should worke that which is good with pleasure and loue, readines and facilitie. Whom therefore shall we rather beleeue, Christ or the Scholemen: but I leaue that to your iudgement. Of such corrupt and euell vnderstanding of the Lawe, Monasteries afterwardes came, whereby entred in this opinion, that it was thought to be sufficient to saluation, to liue in a Monasterie, and to follow the orders thereof, although that were done euen with griefe of mynde. So they taught: But Christ will haue vs to worke with pleasure and cheerefulnes, so that if any thinge be done with burden or griefe of conscience, it is synne: remoue thy selfe therefore quickly from such a worke. Wherefore thus it might be said vnto them: Behold O man, thou miserable creature oughtest to be caried with a certaine delight to

We must worke with pleasure and cheerefulnes, not w̄ grudging or griefe.

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the doinge of the lawe of God, but thou commest with no pleasure or cheerefulnes hereunto, now see that thou shew thy pleasure and loue herein, otherwise thou shalt be the enemie of God, and the friend of Satan: thus men leauing their owne rashnes, might come to the knowledge of themselues, and might then say: Therefore, O God, am I condemned, and that not vniustly. Hereupon it followeth, that we are all vnder Satan, as long as we feele in vs this difficultie and harones to doe that which is good. Wherefore if I should speake the trueth, I should say thus, I fynde in deede somethinge that is good in the lawe of God, but it is my death, and if it could be, I would wish that it were not. So are all men affected in their heart, as S. Paule plainly teacheth Rom. 7. If we should remaine in such condemnation, we must needes perish for euer.

There is therefore an other part, that is, the Gospell, which sheweth comfort and saluation, declaring where that is to be had, whereby the Lawe is fulfilled. When therefore I know by the Lawe that I am a condemned man, then ly I halfe dead among theeues, Satan hath spoiled my soule, and hath moreouer in Adam taken away all faith, all righteousnes, and hath left nothing but bodily life, which is also quickly extinguished. Then come Leuites and Priestes, which teach this and that, but can helpe nothing, and so passe by. But when the Samaritane commeth, he helpeth: that is, when Christ commeth, he sheweth his mercy vnto vs, saying after this sort: Behold thou oughtest in deede to loue God with all thine heart, but thou doest it not, now beleeue onely in me, & thou shalt enioy my obedience as thine owne: this onely helpeth me: Then he putteth me on his owne beast, that is, on himselfe, and carieth me into the Inne, that is, into the Church of the faithfull, then he byandby poureth his grace into me, that is, oyle, that I may feele my selfe to be layd vpon his shoulder, that at the last maketh me to be of a good cheere, & quiet & well affected in conscience. Afterward he poureth in wine also, which with his sharpnes may abate & tame the force of old Adam. And yet am I not so wholy restored vnto health, health is in deede poured in & begon, but not yet wholy finished: then Christ hath care of me, & by his grace poured into me, doth purifie me, that frō day to day I may become more chast, meeke, gētle, faithfull, &c: vntill I wholy dy, for then I shalbe altogether made

The office of the Gospell.

perfect. So when we shall come to God the father, and be asked of him, whether we beleeued in God, whether we loued him, &c: the Samaritane Christ our Lord, who hath layed vs on his owne beast, will come forth and saye: Loe Father, although they haue not wholy fulfilled thy Lawe, yet haue I fulfilled it, suffer thou that to turne to the commoditie of them that beleeue in me. So is it needefull that all the Saincts albeit verie holy, be layed vpon the backe of Christ. If so be that the holiest of all, as the Priestes and Leuites could not satisfie the Lawe, how shall we go about with our famed workes, as with shauing, habit &c, to fulfill the same? O wretched & miserable calamitie. These things shall now suffize to haue bin spoken concerning this text: Let vs pray vnto God, that he will giue vs his grace.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, CONCERNING THE EXERCISE AND INCREASING OF FAITH.

Iohn 4.

Verse 46. THere was a certeine ruler, whose sonne was sicke at Capernaum.

47. When he heard that Iesus was come out of Iudea into Galile, he wēt vnto him, & besought him, that he would go downe, & heale his sonne: for he was euen ready to die.

48. Then said Iesus vnto him, Except ye see signes and wonders, ye will not beleeue.

49. The

49. The ruler ſaid vnto him, Syr, goe downe before my ſonne die.

50. Ieſus ſaid vnto him, Goe thy waie, thy ſonne liueth: and the man beleeued the word that Ieſus had ſpoken vnto him, and went his waye.

51. And as he was now going downe, his ſeruaũts met him, ſaying, Thy ſonne liueth.

52. Then enquired he of them the houre when he beganne to amend. And they ſaid vnto him, yeſterdaye the ſeuenth houre the feuer leſte him.

53. Then the father knew that it was the ſame houre in the which Ieſus had ſaid vnto him, Thy ſonne liueth, and he beleeued, and all his houſehold.

54. This ſecond miracle did Ieſus againe, after he was come out of Iudea into Galile.

AN excellent example of faith is ſet forth in this text, of what ſort it is, of what nature and qualitie, namely, that it is not a reſting or idle thinge, but liuely and voyd of idlenes, which goeth not backe, but proceedeth on, and ſtill more and more increaſeth. Which if it be not done, it is no faith, but onely a dead opinion of God in the heart. For a true and ſyncere faith, which the holy Ghoſt poureth into the heart, can not be idle: which I ſay for this cauſe, that no man be therefore ſecure, albeit he hath obtained faith, neither that he ſtay there. It is nothing to beginne, vnleſſe we increaſe by continual going forward, and come to greater knowledge of God. For on the contrarie ſide it is the nature and qualitie of our aduerſarie Satan, not to be idle, as S. Peter ſayth: Satan ſleepeth not, but goeth about as a roring Lion, ſeeking whom he may deuoure. If ſo be that the Deuell is neither idle, neither ſleepe commeth vpon him, neither ſhall it be meete for a Chriſtian to be idle or put his handes in

A true fayth is not idle, but increaſeth more and more.

his bosom, forasmuch as he hath the Deuell his enemie, who is stronger then himselfe: for he is called the prince of the world, as it is mentioned in the Epistle appointed to be read in the Church on this day: VVe wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, & against the worldly gouernours, the princes of the darkenes of this world, against spirituall wickednesses, which are in hie places. This prince gouerneth the world, furiously and fiercely rageth, and can not suffer the prosperous succes of a Christian. Neither is it for his profit to be suffered of him, for an entrie being made hereby, his kingdome is burst into, and his net torne in peeces, out of which as much as he is able, he suffereth no Christian to escape. Moreouer when the fire of faith is kindled, and the flame fostered, and Satan trieth and marketh that, byandby he practizeth deceit against it, for he knoweth how much hinderaunce his kingdome shall take thereby, wherefore as earnestly as he can, euen with all his power, he defendeth his kingdome, & laboureth to keepe all in obedience to him.

Ephes.6.12.

True Christians are not free from tētatiō, for the deuel bēdeth his force especially against them.

Wherefore it is most certaine, that when a Christian hath begon to beleeue, byandby tentation and persecution will assaile him. Which if it come not to passe, it is a signe that his faith is not yet sound, and that he hath not as yet truly receiued the Gospell. For wicked Satan hath a verie sharpe sight, he byandby spieth out where is a true Christian, wherefore he applieth himselfe wholy vnto this, that he may enforce him to fall, and may besiege him, and assaile him on euerie side: for he can not suffer that any should reuolt from his kingdome. It is perilous therefore for a man to beleeue, for the Deuill is ready that he may set vpon him, and ouerthrowe him, which sometime chaunceth euen to verie holy men, which vnderstand the word of God well, when they stand vpright, and thinke themselues safe, that priuie wicked sende commeth vpon them by litle and litle, and wrastleth with them so longe, till he ouerthrow them, and cast them to the earth. Set before thine eyes Moses and Aaron, who were guides of the Iewes, they had an excellent fayth, when they brought the people out of Egypt, and all the people in fayth passed through the redde sea, death, the wide wildernes, and many other meruelous thinges, whereby they shewed their fayth, but at the last they fall grieuously, they feare that they

The Saincts of God doe sometimes fall euē grieuously.

they shall perish with hunger. Is it not a thinge most miserable, that by so great signes they shew their faith, they goe into death and through death, wrastle with it, and ouercome it, and yet while they thinke them selues surest, they fal, and suffer themselues to be ouercome of the belly, murmure against God, and are so grieuously tempted, that they fall all together. Wherefore it is not certaine and sure, if one begin to beleue, and doth not alwayes more and more increase in faith. Yea that godly man Moses, who had so great and so strong a faith, did fall also, when as he should bring water out of the rocke with a staffe, he douted, and talked thus to the people: Come let vs see whether we can bring water out of the rocke. That good Moses, which had shewed so many and so great signes, falleth into reason and carnall vnderstanding, fearing lest the incredulitie of the people would hinder so great a miracle & signe. But it had behoued him to cleaue fast to the word of God, and to thinke it higher, greater, stronger, and mightier, then the vnbeleefe of the people: that great man was tempted, he stumbled, and was ouerthrowne.

We haue like examples in the newe Testament: Peter was hardie, and firme in faith, when he beheld Christ vpon the water, he sayd vnto him with a strong faith: Lord suffer me to come vnto thee, committing him selfe to the water euen as to the ship, he thought assuredly that the water would beare him. Then was there an excellent faith in Peter, and great courage, which durst commit him selfe wholy vnto death in the middest of the sea, reposing his hope freely & boldly in Christ. But when he thought him self most safe, a storme and tempest ariseth, he forgetting the word, suffereth his faith to faile, and he him selfe also falleth, suffering Satan to plucke faith out of his hart. Faith truely is a subtill and delicate thing, a small thing maketh vs to stumble and fall. Satan is alwaies watchfull, and circumspect, and doth by it by obtaine his purpose, if we doe not diligenely watch. How earnestly did the common people followe Christ? they thought that he was a Prophet, and did so cleaue vnto him, and so defend him, that the Princes of the people were made astonied, neither durst they so much as lay hand on him. But when they apprehend him, proceede against him, fasten him to the crosse, the people forsake him all that they may, and come no more at him. A Prophet is present, and no man any more afflicteth him, but they rather crie

Let him that thinketh he standeth take heede lest he fall.

out against him, crucifie him, crucifie him: and that which is most detestable of all, his owne Disciples reuolt from him. What is become now both of their faith and holines?

So is it at this day in our time: at the first when the Gospell began to shine, the preaching thereof was acceptable and pleasant, then many seemed willing to embrace it, but when Munkes, sacrificing Priests, Nunnes, &c. began to be spoken against, and the Masse to be confuted, all (a meruelous thinge to be spoken) fell away as leaues of trees. Againe, when Princes also were touched, the Gospel suffered greater persecution, and did by litle and litle daily decrease. Moreouer Satan is not idle, whereupon he stirreth vp heresies and schismes, for how many sects haue we hitherto suffered? he sleepeth not, he will stirre vp greater mischiefes also, he neuer resteth, but looketh about, and trieth euery way, that he may bringe the matter to that passe, and preuaile so farre, that no sound doctrine may remaine in the church, but that if all Germanie be diligently viewed, a sermon may no where be found, wherein the word of God is truely preached, as it was before. He goeth about to extinguish and abolish all the doctrine of Christ now increasing, for he can not abide it. It is not an easie thing to auoid so great an enemie, he lyeth in wait, and vieweth all places, and so diligently bestirreth him selfe, that euen the learned fall, and the elect stumble, as Moses, S. Peter, with the rest of the Apostles. We thinke our selues safe, and liue securely, no man considereth, no man hath a care of the worde, we should pray & beseech God, that he would vouchsafe to preserue the Gospell, and make his holy name to be spred and published more abroad. But no man is touched with care hereof, no man prayeth that it may haue good successe. Wherefore it is to be feared that at the last it will come to passe, that God will suffer Satan and vs to runne together into one, then shal we be in a desperate case, for he will easily throw vs to the ground, when we are come into so great miserie by our owne slothfulnes and default.

We must not trust to our owne strēgth but to the helpe & assistāce of God.

Satan moreouer can so sette forth the matter by seditious spirits, that men shall thinke it to be iust. As the Arrians were perswaded that their opinion was sound. But a Christian humbleth him selfe, taketh nothing rashly vpon him selfe, but with an humble hart sayth thus vnto God: Mooste gracious God, albeit I knowe that the cause which I fauour is not vniust, yet without thy

thy helpe I am not able to maintaine it, thou therfore help me, otherwise I shall be cast and ouerthrowne. He is in deede certaine of his cause, euen as S. Peter was on the water, who could not be surer, when the water did beare him. For he knewe no let or hinderance, but when the winde was great, and the water troubled, he perceiued what was wanting in him: Which is throughly to be receiued into our minde, and considered of vs. For albeit the certaintie of our cause be confirmed, strengthened, and ratified with plaine sentences of the Scripture, yet is it by the might, counsell, and power of God, that we are defended, and Satan our chiefe aduersary and enemie repressed. Which is therefore done, that God may stirre vs vp to watch, and keepe vs in awe, that we may alwayes be watchfull, and crie vnto him: Lorde helpe vs, & increase our faith, for without thee we are able to doe nothing. Our hart must be alwayes so disposed, as though we beganne to day to beleeue, and alwaies so affected, that we desire and labour to goe more and more forward. For that is the nature, force, and qualitie of faith, that it alwayes increaseth and waxeth stronger. Satan, as it is a litle before mentioned, neither is idle, nor resteth, if he be once ouerthrowne he riseth againe, if he can not enter in by the doore, he endeuoureth to steale in on the backe side, & if this be not permitted him, he breaketh in through the roofe, or entereth in through a hollow place digged vnder the threshold, for he doth so long earnestly follow his worke, vntill he come in, he vseth many deceits and practizes, if he preuaileth not by one, he taketh in hand an other, and doth that so long, vntill he hath obtained his purpose. Man is a weake and a miserable thing, as S. Paule sayth 2. Cor. 4: We haue this treasure in earthen vessels. I am more fraile then a pot compared to the potter, and a pot is a very weake thinge, inasmuch as it is easily broken, and whatsoeuer is in it, is spilt.

Now Satan when he marketh how great a treasure faith is, kept in a fraile pot (that I may so speake) he is in a great rage & furie, and sayth thus vnto vs: I will touch thee, I will breake thy potte, thou hast a great treasure, which I will spill. So God setteth the silly pot in the middest of enemies, which should vtterly perish euen in a mom̄et, if he did not defend it, for it may quickly be shaken and broken in peeces, yea if it be but bitten of a viper, it perisheth. And it is not hard from Satan euen in one mo-

Though we be of our selues most fraile and weake, yet God setteth

vs in the middest of most stronge enemies, that it may appeare that we stand not by our owne strength, but by the singular helpe & assistance of God.

ment to waste and destroy a whole cuntry. Wherfore that vexeth him, that God dealeth with him so simply, setting a silly potte against him, when as he notwithstanding is so great a Prince and the most mighty ruler of this world. Now it would grieue me, if I being stronge and valiant, any man should set vpon me with a reede, surely I being moued with anger would breake the reede in peeces: for I had leuer that he would set vpon me w a speare, sword, and armed on all partes. It grieued stout Goliath, that Dauid durst come vnto him vnarmed onely with a staffe. So it greatly grieueth the deuill, that God will suppresse him by flesh & blood, if some stout spirit should resist him, it would not grieue him so much, for that troubleth him aboue measure, that a silly worme, a fraile pot should come to despise him, an earthen vessell against a most mighty Prince. God hath layd vp this treasure, sayth Paul, in a miserable and weake vessell: for man is a weake creature, by and by moued to wrath, to couetousnes, to pride, &c. so that Satan may easily shake and breake the vessell: for if God would permit him, he would forthwith breake it all to peeces. Now all this is done, sayth Paul, that we may know, that not by our own power, but by the power of God we are preserued from all euills, and especially from the force and furie of Satan, who goeth about like a roring lyon, desiring to deuse and deuoure the weake vessells and fraile pots: and that we may hereby also be stirred vp to be watchfull and to lift vp our eyes toward heauen, and pray vnto God that he will vouchsafe to encrease and defend our faith, and preserue the vessell by his strength. Thus haue we an entrance vnto our text, it remaineth that we doe now consider the same in order: The Euangelist sayth thus:

There was a certaine ruler, whose sonne was sicke at Capernaum. It falleth out with many other men also, that they haue their children sicke: but that which he sayth afterward is to be marked: When he heard that Iesus was come out of Iudea into Galile, he went vnto him, and besought him that he would goe downe, and heale his sonne: for he was euen ready to dye. Here faith beginneth and trusteth in Christ. Nowe that he had faith the Gospell declareth: for he heard of Christ how he healed the sicke, thereupon his hart was set vpon him, and he resorteth vnto him, thinking thus: If he helpeth all men, he will also helpe me, and will heale my sonne. He counteth Christ for such a man

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as is able to helpe men, and hopeth and promiseth to him selfe all goodnes from him: and that in deede is a true Christian hart, which cleaueth fast vnto God. If that this ruler had stoode in a place or way hauing two pathes, douting with him selfe, he had not gone vnto Christ, but his hart would haue bene thus affected: He helpeth others in deede, but who can tell, whether he will help me also? Howbeit he doth not thus dout of Christ, but riseth, and maketh hast vnto him. This is the beginning of faith, now ye shal see how Christ meeteth him on the other side, and aunswereth otherwise then he thought for, that his faith might be tried, and thus he sayth vnto him:

Except ye see signes and wonders ye will not beleeue. Christ sayd also to S. Peter Matth. 14: Why doost thou dout, O thou of litle faith? Peter vndoutedly had faith, & did beleue in Christ, whereupon he committed him selfe to the water, but when he saw the winde, he was afraide, and beganne to be drowned: so in this place, that good man heareth a good report of Christ, that he helpeth euery man, which he beleeueth and therefore resorteth vnto him. But when he heareth that Christ denieth to come, he stumbleth, and his faith faileth, fearing that Christ would not come vnto him. This is as it were an assault & sore blowe, here his new begun faith beginneth to be tempted. It was a hard saying: except ye see signes and wonders, ye will not beleeue: which saying doth so tempt him, and bring him into dout, that he almost falleth. Satan standing at his backe, sayth vnto him: get thee home and looke to thy busines, for he will not helpe thee. Notwithstanding the ruler did not by and by leaue of, but prayed the Lorde moreouer: Lorde come downe before my sonne dye. Here his faith began to be in daunger & to faile, but God doth not forsake him, but lifteth him vp againe, and sayth vnto him:

Goe thy way, thy sonne liueth. If the ruler had not had faith, he woulde not haue requested Christ to come to his sonne. What therefore doth he want? euen this: he beleeued if Christ came to his house, he coulde then helpe his sonne, if he did not come, he could not helpe him. Neither did his faith extende so farre, as to beleeue that Christ euen being absent could heale the sicke: but it behoued that he should haue a higher faith. Wherfore Christ lifteth him vp, and setteth him in a higher state, and sayth vnto him: Goe thy way, thy sonne liueth. Here he first ascendeth from his

former faith, whereby he beleeued that Christ could heale being present, and commeth to a higher faith, so that now he beleeueth the word. For if he had not beleeued the word, he would not haue left Christ, neither would haue departed from him, vntill he had come with him to his house. But hauing layd holde on the word, he cleaueth vnto it by faith, for his sonne is at home, and Christ is with his father. Wherefore the Father receiueth this word in his hart, and thinketh with him selfe after this sort: My sonne is sicke, but I shall find him whole: which faith was contrary both to reason & experience. Reason would haue thought thus: When I came from my sonne he was sicke, as I did leaue him, so shall I find him. But faith sayth otherwise, it resteth onely in the word & trusteth wholy vnto it, neither douteth it, that any thing will fall out otherwise then the word speaketh: Goe thy way, thy sonne liueth. This is a right and a stronge faith, when as man leaueth sense, wisedome, reason, and trusteth wholy to the worde of God. Christ sayth, thy sonne liueth: And he sayth with him selfe, without dout it is true, I shall so find it. So faith remaineth not idle, nor resteth, but increaseth and goeth forward.

True faith leaueth all wisedom and reason, and trusteth to the onely word of God.

Thus Christ dealeth with vs also, he suffereth vs to be tempted, that we may increase in faith: if in the ende of our life when we must dye, we shall haue but a sparke of such faith, we shall be in a good case, as Christ sayth vnto his Disciples Matth. 17: If ye haue faith as much as is a graine of musterd seede, ye shal say vnto this mountaine: Remoue hence to yonder place, & it shall be remoued: and nothing shal be vnpossible vnto you. A graine of musterd seede is but a small thing, but he that hath faith agreeable to the smalnes of this graine, shall be saued. Neither must we so much cōsider this, that our faith is litle, but we must looke vnto this, we must haue regard vnto this, that the graine of musterd seede do remaine, and be not eaten vp of the birdes, that Satan plucke not faith out of our hartes. We must not looke how litle the faith is, but we must regarde and take heede that faith be not taken away. Peter had faith vpon the sea, and therefore was he caried of the water, that he should not be drowned, if he had so perseuered in faith, he might well haue walked an hundred miles vpon the sea, but when he fayled in faith, he began to be drowned. So Moses had a stronge faith, but he fell from it. It consisteth not in the strength or stendernes of faith, that we doe stand, but in perse-

perseuering and remaining faithfull. It may be that he shall perseuer in faith, which hath but a slender faith, and he that hath a strong faith shall fall and dout. Moses and Peter had an excellent faith, so that Moses by faith did leade ỳ people through the middest of the sea and death, and Peter without douting went downe out of the ship into the sea, but they fall from their faith, howbeit God raiseth them vp quickly again. But the Theefe on the crosse hauing once layd hold of faith, continued constant. Nowe God therefore suffereth it to be thus, that he may bring down rash arrogancie, that we doe not gloriously extol our selues, but alwaies remaine in feare & awe. For when tentation commeth vpon vs, we doe forthwith fal into errour, if God do not assist & strengthen vs, of which thinge we may see a very goodly similitude in a tree, which in the spring time buddeth and openeth it selfe, so that it doth as it were become white by reason of the blossoms. A shower falling vpon it, many of the blossoms are shaken of, & the frost also doth much more consume them. Afterward when the frute beginneth to spring forth, some great winde blowing, much of it being newly come forth falleth downe, and when it waxeth ripe, the caterpiller commeth, which with other wormes gnaweth & spoyleth it so much, that scarce the twentieth part, yea scarce the hundreth part many times remaineth. The same commeth to passe with the hearers of the Gospell, in the beginning thereof euery one coueteth to be a true Christian, euery one liketh of it very well, and the first frutes thereof are very pleasant. But when winde, a shower, or tentation commeth, all fall away from it by companies: afterwards sects and seditions arise, which like vnto wormes and kankers gnaw and infect the frutes of the Gospell, and so many false opinions spring vp, that very few doe perseuer in the true profession of the Gospell.

A proper & apt similitude.

We haue here, thankes be giuen to Almighty God, the worde of God plentifully taught, we are deliuered out of deepe & great darkenes, but we forgetting the word are made weake, we liue hauing no care of the word, for it is not sauory vnto vs. But when as hereafter false prophets shall breake in with their corrupt opinions, and Satan also shall violently assaile vs, finding vs idle, and the house swept and garnished, he will bring with him seuen other spirits worse then him self, and the ende shall be worse then the beginning. Which thinges if they so fall out, let vs not there-

foꝛe be quite discouraged, but let vs rather instruct one an other, that we may learne to cleaue vnto God, and pꝛay vnto him, and say: Mercifull God, thou hast giuen vnto me to become a Chꝛistian, giue vnto me also that I may persꝛeuer, and become daily richer in faith. Albeit the whole woꝛld did resist, and euery one conspired to destroy the Gospell, yet wil I be nothing moued, but by thy diuine helpe will depend on the Gospell.

They which beleeue shal assuredly obtaine al good thinges that they pray vnto God for.

But to returne againe to the Ruler, ye haue heard that his faith was very notable and excellent, he heareth the woꝛde, thy sonne liueth, he beleeueth it, and goeth away giuing honour to God, he receiueth the only woꝛd, he trusteth wholy vnto it. Hereupō God dealeth so graciously with him, that he restoꝛeth health vnto his sonne, raiseth him vp, and strengtheneth him in faith, neither suffereth him to sticke in dout oꝛ infirmitie, but establisheth him, and maketh him stronge, and causeth him to goe foꝛward & increase. Neither doth God delay vntill he commeth home, but declareth vnto him being yet in his iouney the helth of his sonne, sending his seruaunts to meete him, that they might bꝛinge him good newes, and say: thy sonne liueth. Foꝛ God can not differre oꝛ delay, where there is a sincere hart, which trusteth in him alone, all other thinges being left, looking onely vnto the woꝛd of God, there God can not hide him selfe, but reuealeth him selfe, & commeth vnto such a hart, & maketh his abode there, as the Lord sayth Joh. 14. Now what can be moꝛe ioyful, thē foꝛ a mā to giue credit to the woꝛd of God, & to be plucked from it by no affliction oꝛ tentation, but to shut his eyes against euery assault of Satan, to lay aside humane sense, vnderstanding, reason, & wisedom, and to say daily in his hart: God hath spoken it, he can not lye. I say nothing is moꝛe ioyfull then such a faith. Foꝛ whatsoeuer we aske of God with such a faith, we receiue it moꝛe aboundantly of him, then euer we desired it, and God is sooner pꝛesent with vs, then we had thought. Hereupon the Euangelist vseth so many woꝛdes euen vnpꝛofitable, as it appeareth vnto vs, as these: The man beleeued the word that Iesus had spoken vnto him, and went his vvay. And as he vvas novv going dovvne, his seruaunts met him, saying, Thy sonne liueth. Then inquired he of them the houre vvhen he began to amend: and they sayd vnto him: Yesterday the seuenth houre the feuer left him. Then the father knevv, that it vvas the same houre in the vvhich Iesus sayd vnto him:

him: Thy sonne liueth. All which tende vnto this ende, that we should know that if we beleeue in the Lord he will giue vs abundantly, whatsoeuer we shall pray vnto him for.

The conclusion the Euangelist maketh as followeth: And he beleeued, and all his houshold. He so increased in faith, that he did not onely ascend from a low state to a higher, but he brought others also vnto faith. He had surely an effectuall faith, which did not rest idle and slothfull in the hart, but did breake forth, so that whosoeuer were in his house were brought vnto faith. For this is plainely the nature of faith, this is the qualitie of it, to drawe others vnto it, to burst forth, and apply it self euen vnto the worke of loue, as S. Paule witnesseth Galat. 5: That faith which worketh by loue, is effectuall. For it can not keepe silence or be idle, as Dauid sayth Psal. 116. which place Paule applieth to the faithfull 2. Cor. 4: I beleeued, & therefore haue I spoken. Faith can doe no other, for it is enforced to speake, neither can it keepe silence, inasmuch as he that is endued with it, endeuoureth to profit his neighbour. This ruler had faith for him selfe, but it doth not remaine in him alone, but breaketh forth. For without all dout he declared to his familie, how he came vnto Christ, and receiued comfort of him, which they also beleued. So we also, when we beleeue must open our mouth, and confesse the grace, which God hath shewed vnto vs. Which is the chiefe and most excellent worke of faith, that one instruct an other in the worde. For Paule sayth Rom. 10: With the hart man beleeueth vnto righteousnes, and with the mouth man confesseth to saluation. If we be ashamed of this word, it is a certaine argument of a very light & vncertaine faith. We see therfore that there is no difference with Christ betwene the strong and the weake in faith: for a litle faith is faith also. He therefore came into the world that he might receiue to him selfe, beare and sustaine the weake. If he were so impatient as we be, he would by and by say vnto vs: Get thee from me, I wil none of thee, because thou beleeuest not in me. But this is a thing greatly to be cõmended, when one can handle ỳ weake gently, and doth not deale rigorously with them, and repell them by impatiencie. For although they be weake to day, the houre may come, when they shall receiue the word more aboundantly then we. Thus we ought to instruct and teach one an other, that we may depend on ỳ word of God. For if we continue in sticking

The nature and qualitie of true faith.

The most excellent work of faith.

to the woꝛd, we shall be stronge enough foꝛ the deuill: foꝛ we glory of the woꝛd, albeit we be but weake. Unto Satan, who is able euen in one houre to ouerthꝛow vs all, all men should be euen as a fether, which he would be able to remoue away how and when he will, yea euen with his bꝛeath, but if we beleeue, that fether is made moꝛe heauy vnto him then the hill Olympus. Foꝛ a Chꝛistian beareth Chꝛist in him selfe, and Chꝛist is heauier then heauen and earth. Thus much may suffize concerning this text.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, CONCERNING FREE REMISSION OF SINNES TO THE CONTRITE AND BROKEN IN hart, and terrible iudgement to the indurate and obstinate.

Matth. 18.

Verse 23. IEsus sayd vnto Peter & to the rest of the Disciples: The kingdom of heauen is likened vnto a certaine King, which would take an accoũt of his seruaunts.

24. And when he had begon to recken, one was brought vnto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

25. And becauſe he had nothing to pay, his Lord commaunded him to be solde, and his wife, & his children, and all that he had, and the dette to be payed.

26. The seruaunt therefore fell downe, and worshipped

shipped him saying: Lorde refraine thine anger toward me, and I will pay thee all.

27. Then that seruaunts Lord had compassion, & loosed him, and forgaue him the dette.

28. But the same seruant went out, & found one of his fellow seruaunts, which owed him an hundred pence, and he layed handes on him, and thratled him, saying: Pay me that thou owest.

29. Then his fellow seruaunt fel down at his feete, and besought him, saying: Refraine thine anger towards me, and I will pay thee all.

30. Yet he would not, but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the dette.

31. And when his other fellow seruants saw what was done, they were very sory, and came, and declared vnto their Lord all that was done.

32. Then his Lord called him vnto him, and sayd to him: O euill seruaunt, I forgaue thee all that dette, because thou prayedst me.

33. Oughtest not thou also to haue had pittie on thy fellow seruant, euen as I had pittie on thee?

34. So his Lord was wrath, and deliuered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due to him.

35. So likewise shall myne heauenly Father doe vnto you, except ye forgiue from your hartes, eche one to his brother their trespasses.

CHrist brought forth this parable vnto that aunswere which he had made to Sainct Peter, vnto whom he had before committed the keies of binding and loosing. For when S. Peter asked him, howe oft he should forgiue his brother his offence, whether it were enough to forgiue him seuen times, & he aunswered, not seuen times, but seuentie times

seuen times, he then added this similitude, by which he inferreth, that his heauenly father will do likewise vnto vs, if we do not forgiue our neighbour, euen as the King did here vnto the seruaunt, which would not forgiue his fellow seruaunt a smal det, when as his Lord had forgiuē him so much. We haue often times taught that the kingdom of God wherein he reigneth by the Gospell, is nothing els, but such a state or gouernment, wherin is meere forgiuenes of sinnes: so that where such a gouernment is not, wherin sinne is pardoned, neither is there the Gospell nor kingdome. Wherefore those two kingdoms are to be separated: one, wherin sinnes are punished, & an other wherin they are forgiuē, or wherin the law is exacted, & wherein that which is due by the lawe, is remitted. In the kingdom of God, where he reigneth by the Gospell, there is no exacting of the lawe, neither any dealing by the law, but onely remission and forgiuenes, neither wrath nor punishing, but brotherly seruice and well doing one to an other. Notwithstanding the ciuill law or Magistrate is not taken away, for this parable speaketh not any thing of worldly gouernment, but of the kingdom of God only. Wherefore he that is yet gouerned onely by the regiment of the world, is yet farre of from the kingdom of heauen, for worldly gouernment pertaineth wholy to inferiour thinges. As if a Prince gouerne his people so, that he suffer iniurie to be done to none, punishing offenders, he doth wel, & is therfore cōmended. For in that gouernment this sentence flourisheth: Pay that thou owest: which if thou doe not, thou shalt be cast into prisō. Such gouernmēt we must haue, howbeit we come not to heauen by it, neither is the world therefore saued, but this gouernment is therefore necessary, that the world do not become worse. For it is only a defence & fortification against wickednes, which if it were not, one would deuoure an other, neither could any man keepe in safetie his owne life, wife, goods, children, &c. That therfore all things should not fal, come to ruine, and perish, God hath appointed the sword of the Magistrate, whereby wickednes may be partly repressed, peace and quietnes among men maintained, & one may not doe an other iniurie, wherefore this is in any wise to be kept. But, as I sayd, it is not ordained for them that are in the kingdom of grace, but therefore onely, that men be not more deepely plunged in wickednes, and become worse.

The kingdō of grace.

Ciuill gouernment.

Wherefore no man that is onely vnder the regiment of the world,

worlde, ought to glorye, that he doth therefore well before God, before whom all is yet vnrighteous. For thou must come so farre, that thou do resigne that which is iust before the worlde, & yeeld of thine owne right. This the Gospell doth here require, which on either side setteth forth vnto vs onely forgiuenes. First the Lord forgiueth the seruaunt all the dette: then he requireth of him, that he forgiue his fellow seruaunt his, and remit his offence. These thinges God requireth, and so must his kingdom be ordered: that no man be so wicked, neither suffer him selfe so to be moued, that he can not forgiue his neighbour. And as it is a litle before this text taught in the Gospel, if he should prouoke thee to anger euen seuenty times seuen times, that is as oftē as he can offend against thee, thou must yeeld of thine owne right, and cheerefully forgiue him all thinges. Why so? because Christ did the same. For he set vp & erected such a kingdome, as wherein is onely grace, which must at no time ceasse, so that if thou repent all things may wholy be forgiuen thee, as often as thou shalt offend, forasmuch as he hath ordained the Gospell, that it might preach no punishment but onely grace & forgiuenes of sinnes. This kingdom standing, thou mayst alwaies rise again, how deepely soeuer thou fallest, & so often as thou fallest, so as thou repent. For albeit thou fallest, yet this Gospell & mercie seate alwaies continueth. As soone as therfore thou hast risen againe & returned, thou hast grace restored. Howbeit he requireth this of thee, that thou also forgiue thy neighbour all things, which he hath cōmitted against thee, otherwise thou shalt not be in this kingdō of grace, neither shalt becōe partaker of ỳ which ỳ Gospell preacheth, that thy sinnes may be forgiuen thee. This briefly is the summe & meaning of this text.

As the Lord forgiueth vs, so must we also forgiue our neighbour.

Moreouer, we must not here omit, to declare who they be that receiue the Gospell, and vnto whom it is acceptable. For surely that kingdom and gouernment, wherin God reigneth and ruleth by the Gospell, is most excellent and gentle, forasmuch as in it meere forgiuenes of sinnes is preached, howebeit it pearseth not into the hart of euery one, neither is it considered or esteemed of all. For thou mayst finde many light and vnconstant men, who abuse the Gospel, and leade their life dissolutely and loosely, doing what they list, who thinke that they should be rebuked of none, seeing that the Gospel teacheth nothing but forgiuenes of sinnes. The Gospell is not preached to these, who do so vilely esteeme of

Abuse of the Gospell.

a precious treasure, and deale lightly with it. Wherefore neither doe they pertaine to this kingdom but to worldly gouernment, that they may be stopped & let from doing whatsoeuer they like and list. To whom then is it preached? to them which throughly feele such miserie, as this seruaunt did here. Wherefore consider what happeneth vnto him: The Lord taketh pitie of his miserie, forgiueth him more then he durst desire. But before this is done, the text sayth, the Lord first tooke account of his seruaunts, and when he began to recken, one was brought vnto him, which owed him ten thousand talents: and because he had nothing to pay, his Lord commaunded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and the dette to be payed. Which truely were no pleasant wordes, but euen exceeding seueritie and most terrible iudgement, then is he brought into so great perplexitie and distresse, that he falleth downe on the ground, and asketh mercie, and promiseth more then he hath, or is able to pay, saying: Lord refraine thyne anger toward me, and I will pay thee all.

To whom the Gospel is preached.

Here is set forth vnto vs, who they be vnto whom the Gospell is acceptable. For so commeth it to passe betwene God and vs. When God will take an account of vs, he sendeth forth the preaching of his law, whereby we learne to know what we ought to doe: as when God sayth to the conscience: Thou shalt worship no other God, but shalt acknowledge me alone for God, shalt loue me with all thine hart, and repose thy trust and hope in me onely. This is the booke of accounts, wherein is written what we owe, which he taking into his hands, readeth before vs, and sayth. Lo, this thou oughtest to haue done, thou oughtest to feare, loue, and worship me alone, thou oughtest to trust in me alone, and from me to promise to thy selfe all good thinges. Howbeit thou doost otherwise, thou art mine aduersarie, thou beleeuest not in me, but reposest thy trust in other things: and in a summe, thou seest here, that thou doost not obserue so much as the least point of the lawe. When the conscience hath heard these thinges, and the law hath touched one well, he seeth then what he ought to doe, and what he hath not done, and findeth that he hath not kept so much as a letter of the law, and is compelled to confesse, that he hath not performed that obedience and dutie which God iustly requireth of him. What doth the Lord now? When ỳ conscience is thus touched, and feeleth it selfe condemned, and is distressed with exceeding

The preaching of the law.

ding great miserie, he sayth: Sell him, and whatsoeuer he hath, and let him pay the det. This is the iudgement, which forthwith followeth, when the law hath reuealed sinne, and sayd: This thou must doe, that thou oughtest to haue done, and thou hast done nothing thereof: for to sinne is required punishment, that man may be compelled to pay. For God hath not so made his lawe, that he doth not punish them that transgresse it. It is not sweete & pleasant, but bringeth bitter and horrible paine with it, it deliuereth vs to Satan, it casteth vs downe to hell, and leaueth vs wrapped in tentation, vntill we haue payed the vtmost farthing. This S. Paule hath notably well declared Rom. 4, where he sayth: The law worketh nothing but wrath. That is, when it reuealeth vnto vs, that we haue done vniustly, it setteth nothing before vs, but wrath & indignation. For when the conscience seeth that it hath committed euill, it feeleth that it hath deserued eternall death, after which followeth punishment, whereupon it is compelled to despeire.

This is that that the Lorde commaundeth this seruaunt togither with all his substance to be solde, forasmuch as he is not able to pay. But what doth the seruaunt say? the foolish fellow thinketh yet, that he shall pay the dette, he falleth downe and prayeth that he wil haue patience with him. This is the wound and crosse of all consciences, that when sinne biteth them so, that they feele in how euill case they are before God, there is no rest in them, but they runne hither and thither, seeking about, that they may be deliuered from sinnes, & rashly take vpon them as yet to do so great thinges, as wherewith they shall pay God, as we hitherto haue bene instructed, whereupon came so many pilgrimages, collegiate houses, Monasteries, Masses, & other trifles. We pyned our selues with fasting, we scourged our selues with whippes, we were made Monkes and Nunnes, therefore onely, for that we went about to leade such a life, and to do such and so many workes, as whereunto God might haue respect, and thereby be pacified, thinking so to appease and make quiet our consciences, so we committed the same thinges that this foolish fellow did. Such a hart as is touched with the lawe, & throughly feeleth it owne miserie and calamitie, is humbled truely and in deede. Whereupon it falleth downe before the Lord and craueth mercy, Howbeit it is yet defiled with this vice, that it striueth to helpe it selfe, which

Superstitious meanes inuented by men to be deliuered from sinne, and to purchase Gods fauour.

thinge can not be taken away from nature. When as the conscience feeleth such miserie, it dareth presume to promise more then all the Angells in heauen are able to performe. Then is it an easie matter to perswade it to apply it selfe to doe, whatsoeuer can be required of it. For it findeth it selfe alwayes in such a case, that it hopeth that it is able by workes to satisfie for sinnes. Consider those thinges which haue bene hitherto of longe time done in the world, then shalt thou find these thinges to be so: For thus was it preached: Giue somewhat to the building of a Church: Get to be admitted into an holy Monasterie, institute Masses, and thy sinnes shall be forgiuen thee. And when consciences were urged in confession, they would not sticke to say: Whatsoeuer was enioined vs, we haue omitted nothing of it, yea we haue giuen more then we were commaunded. Miserable men reioyced that by this meanes they might prouide for them selues, and therefore they pyned and afflicted them selues, that they might be vnburdened of their sinnes, yet did it preuaile them nothing. For the conscience remained in dout as before, that it knewe not how it stoode before God. But if it were secure and quiet, it fell into that which is worse, to thinke that God hath respect vnto workes, neither can reason doe any other but depend of works. The Lord therefore is touched w affection of mercy toward that misery, where w ỹ seruaunt so entangled & snared w sinnes, is holden, & taking pitie vpon him, doth forgiue and dimisse him. Here is now set forth vnto vs, what ỹ special office & qualitie of ỹ gospel, & how God dealeth with vs. When thou art so drowned in sinnes, & wearieth thy self, that thou mayst deliuer thy selfe from them, the Gospell commeth to thee, & sayth: Doe not so deare brother, it preuaileth nothing, although thou afflict and torment thy selfe euen til thou be mad, thy workes do not profit, but the mercy of God shall deliuer thee, who is touched with thy miserie: for he seeth thee wrapped in calamitie, & wearying thy self, that thou mayst deliuer thy selfe out of the myre, & yet art not able: he, I say, hath regard vnto this, that thou art not able to pay, wherupon he forgiueth thee all, and that of his meere mercie. For he doth not forgiue thee the dette eyther for thy workes or merits, but for that he taketh pittie vppon thy crie, complainte and mourning, and thy falling downe before his knees: that is, God hath respect to an humbled hart, as the Prophet sayth Psal. 51; The sacrifice of God is a troubled

The preaching of the Gospell.

troubled ſpirit: a broken & contrite hart, O God, ſhalt thou not deſpiſe. Such a hart he ſaith, as is broken and humbled, which is not able to helpe it ſelfe, but craueth the helpe of God, and reioyceth in it, ſuch a heart is an acceptable ſacrifice to God, and he that hath it is in the right way to heauen. Now God hauing ſhewed this mercy vnto him, and taken pitie on his miſerie, ceaſſeth to followe his right, and abrogateth it, and ſayth no more: Sell whatſoeuer thou haſt and pay the dette: although he might go forward and ſay: Thou muſt paye, for this my lawe requireth, which I will not haue abrogated for thy ſake: yet will he not deale with him by the lawe, but chaungeth the lawe into grace and fauour, taketh pittie on him, and diſmiſſeth him with his wife, children, and all his ſubſtance, and doth alſo forgiue him the dette.

This is that which God ſuffereth to be preached by the Goſpell: vnto him that beleeueth is remitted not onely the fault, but alſo the punishment, and that of meere mercy, not for any workes ſake. For he that preacheth, that by workes the fault and the punishment may be put awaie, hath euen then denied the Goſpell, forasmuch as theſe two can not agree together, that God hath mercy on thee, and yet that thou doeſt merit ſome thinge. For if it be grace, it is not merit: but if it be merit, then ſhall it not be grace, but dette: for if thou pay thy dette, he ſheweth thee no mercy: but if he ſheweth thee mercy, thou doeſt not make payment. Wherefore we muſt needes acknowledge his mercie toward vs, we muſt receiue of him, and beleeue in him, which the Goſpel here requireth. After therefore that this ſeruaunt is thus humbled with the knowledge of his ſynne, the word is exceeding comfortable vnto him, wherein the Lord pronounceth him free, and forgiueth him both the fault and the punishment. Whereby is alſo declared, that it toucheth not ſluggiſh hearts, that feele no ſynne, neither thoſe that are caried with raſhnes, but onely ſuch afflicted conſciences, as are preſſed with the heauie burden of their ſynnes, which do greatly deſire to be deliuered from them, of them God hath mercy, and forgiueth them all. Wherefore it behoued this ſeruaunt to receiue the word, for vnles he had receiued it, forgiuenes had profited nothing, nay there had bene no forgiuenes at all. It is not therefore enough, that God ſuffereth remiſſion of ſynnes, and a golden peare full of grace to be pre-

Mercy and merit cā not agree togither.

Whom the preaching of the Goſpell profiteth.

ched vnto vs, but it is necessarie that we receiue and beleeue it in heart. If thou beleeue, thou art free from synnes. This is the first part of a Christian life, which both this place and diuers other in the Gospels do teach vs, which consisteth properly in faith, which alone hath to do before God: whereby also is shewed that the Gospell can not be receiued but of a troubled and miserable conscience.

Herupon now may be inferred that they are plaine delusions, whatsoeuer thinges are any otherwise taught concerning our workes, and free will, to wit, that they put away sinnes, and obtaine grace. For the diuine maiestie alone, beholding our miserie, hath pittie vpon vs, for the text sheweth manifestly, that God pardoneth and forgiueth them, that haue nothing, and concludeth that we haue nothing left, wherewith we may pay God. Howsoeuer therefore thou hast free will in temporall matters, yet thou heerest here that it is nothing before God. Wherefore if thou desire to be deliuered from thy synnes, thou must cease to trust in any of thy workes, and must plainly despeire concerning them, and flie vnto Christ, pray vnto God for grace, finally receiue the Gospell by faith.

Now followeth the other part, wherein the felow seruaunt also is delt with. This seruaunt now hath enough, he saueth his body, goods, wife, children, &c. and hath his Lord fauourable vnto him. Wherfore he should surely be very foolish, if he should now depart, and do what he is able for the reconciliation of his Lord, for his Lord might worthely say that he is mocked of him. He hath neede therefore of no worke, but that he receiue such grace & fauour as is offered him, so may he be of a good cheere, giuing thankes to his Lord, and dealing so with others as his Lord hath delt with him. After the same sort is it with vs, for when we beleeue, we haue God fauourable & mercifull vnto vs, neither do we neede any thing more, but now it were time that we should forthwith die. Notwithstanding if we must as yet liue still in the earth, our life ought to be ordered so, that we seeke not to obtaine the fauour of God by workes. For he that doth this, doth mocke & dishonour God, as it hath bin hitherto taught, that God is to be sollicited so long by good workes, prayers, fastings, & such like, vntill we obtaine his grace and fauour. We haue obtained grace, not by workes, but by mercy, now if thou must

We must endeuour by our workes to profit our neighbour, & not seeke to obtaine Gods fauour by them.

muſt liue, thou muſt haue what to doe, and wherewith to occupie thy ſelfe, and it is meete that all this be referred to thy neighbour.

The ſeruaunt went out, as Chriſt ſayth, and found his fellow ſeruaunt, whome he taketh by the throte and dealeth rigorouſly with him, and will be wholy payd of him, ſhewing him no mercy or fauour at all. I haue ſaid elſwhere, that Chriſtians muſt burſt forth by workes, & by their deedes before men witnes that they haue a ſyncere faith. God needeth no workes, but faith ſuffiseth him, howbeit he therefore requireth them to be done of thee, that by them thou mayſt ſhew thy faith, both before thy ſelfe and alſo before the whole world, for he knoweth thy faith verie well, but thou thy ſelfe and men do not yet throughly ſee it. Thou therefore muſt direct ſuch workes ſo, that they may profit thy neighbour. Now whereas this ſeruaunt ſhould thus haue done, what doth he? euen the ſame that we doe, who ſeeme vnto our ſelues to beleeue, and partly haue faith, and are glad that we haue heard the Goſpell, whereof we can diſpute and talke many thinges, but no man goeth about to expreſſe it in his life. We haue brought the matter ſo farre, that the doctrine and trifles of Satan are ſome what abated and layde aſyde, that we do now ſee and know, what is iuſt, and what vniuſt: that we muſt haue to do with God by onely faith, and by workes with our neighbour. But we can not bring it to this paſſe, that loue may beginne, and doe that to an other which God hath done vnto vs, as we our ſelues complaine, that many of vs are become worſe then they were before. As therefore this ſeruaunt refuſed to remit his neighbour the dette, and delt extremely with him, ſo alſo doe we, ſaying: It is not meete that I ſhould giue that that is myne to an other, neglecting myne owne right. If this man hath prouoked me to anger, it is his dutie to pacifie me, & to labour by intreatie to put away myne anger. Truly thus the world teacheth and doth, for it affirmeth it to be iuſt and right. Neither will any Prince or magiſtrate enforce thee to giue that which is thine to an other, but will ſuffer thee to do what pleaſeth thee with thine owne goods. The magiſtrate in deede reſtrayneth thee from doinge what thou liſt with the good of an other, but he conſtraineth thee not to giue thine owne ſubſtaunce to an other, for that is againſt the Lawe of nations, which euen reaſon pronouncing it, giueth to euerie

Buſie talkers & ſlow walkers.

one that which is his owne: wherefore he doth not vnequally or vniustly, which vseth his owne thinges at his will, & taketh not away wrongfully the goods of an other.

But what doeth the Gospell saye? If God also had held his owne right, and sayd: I do well in that I punish offenders, and take that which is myne owne, who shall let me? what I praye you should become of all vs? We should be thrust downe to Satan. Wherefore, whereas he hath left his right toward thee, he will haue thee do the same toward other: and therefore thou abrogating thyne owne right, thinke thus with thy selfe: If God hath forgiuen me tenne thousand talents, why should not I forgiue my neighbour an hundred pence? God might haue exacted his owne right, neuertheless he dothe not soe, but becommeth a fauourable Lorde vnto thee, taketh pittie vpon thee, and forgiueth thee: why therefore shouldest not thou doe likewise to thy neighbour? Wherefore if thou wilt haue to doe in his kingdome, thou must doe as he doeth: but if thou haddest rather remaine in the kingdome of the worlde, thou shalt neuer enter into his kingdome. Hereunto pertaineth that sentence, which Christ in the last daye shall pronounce vpon the vnbeleeuers: I was an hungred, and ye gaue me no meate: I thirsted, and ye gaue me no drinke, &c. But if thou contend hereagainst: Notwithstanding ye say, that God will not haue respect vnto workes, neither will saue any because of them. I saye he will haue them done frankely and freely, not that we may merit any thing thereby, but that we may doe them to the profite of our neighbours, and witnes our syncere fayth by them. For what hast thou that thou mayst giue him, and whereby thou mayst deserue that he should pardon whatsoeuer thou hast committed against him? Or what doth he get thereby? nothing truely, but that thou giuest vnto him praise and thanks. And this is the other part of a Christian life, the name whereof is loue.

We must be mercifull to our brethren as God is mercifull to vs.

Matth. 25.

They therefore that shew not their faith by the workes of loue, are such seruaunts, as will haue themselues forgiuen, when as they notwithstanding doe not forgiue their neighbour, neither peeld of their owne right, with whom it shall likewise fall out as it did with this seruaunt. For when the other seruaunts (that is, the ministers and preachers of the Gospell) shall see it, that God hath forgiuen them all, and yet they will not forgiue any, they

They that will shew no mercy shall themselues finde none.

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are troubled, that they are compelled to see such thinges, and it grieueth them verie sore, that men doe so vndiscreetly apply themselues to the Gospell, and not rightly receiue it. What doe they then? They can do no other, but come to their Lord, and complaine vnto him of such thinges, and say: Lord, thus it is: thou forgiuest them both the fault and the punishment, yea pardonest them all thinges, and yet we can not bring them so farre, as to deale so with others as thou hast delt with them. This is the complaint: the Lord therefore will cause them to come before him in the last iudgement, and will lay these thinges against them saying: when thou wast afflicted with hunger, thirst, miserie, &c: I did helpe thee: when thou didst lye drowned in synnes, I hauing mercy vpon thee, did forgiue thee. Hast thou done the same to thy neighbour? Then he shall pronounce this sentence on him: Thou wicked one, I was touched with mercy toward thee, yea I yeelded of myne owne right, but thou wouldest not take pittie on others, nor forgiue them their offence, wherefore thou shalt now pay thy dette. Here is no grace and mercy, but most grieuous wrath and eternall condemnation, then no prayers do helpe, wherefore he is compelled to holde his peace, and is throwne headlong into paine, vntill he pay the vttermost farthinge. This is that which Sainct Peter hath spoken of them, 2.Pet.2.21. which after they haue heard the Gospell, notwithstanding goe backe, that it had bin better for them, if they had neuer acknowledged the waye of righteousnes, then after they haue acknowledged it, to turne from the holy commaundement giuen vnto them. Why had it bin better? Because while they goe backe, it becōmeth worse with them then it was before they heard the Gospell, as Christ sayth of the vncleane spirit Matth. 12, which taketh vnto himselfe seuen other spirits worse then himselfe, with which he commeth, and dwelleth in that man, out of whom he before had gone, and so the end of that man is worse then the beginning. After the same maner commeth it to passe with vs, and shal hereafter also be vsuall: so also hath it fallen out with Rome. In the time of the Martyrs she was in her best flower, but afterward she fell, and abhomination was there erected, that Antichrist might reigne there, yea she became such a one, that worse she can not be. The grace of God, which is reuealed and preached by the Gospel, was hidde, that men might not attaine vnto it: where-

foꝛe it could not be but a great and grieuous ſcourge and plague ſhould follow.

So we alſo ſhall trie that great vengeance will come vpõ vs, foꝛ that we do not beleeue noꝛ obey the Goſpell, which we haue, and know. Foꝛ as often as God would ſend an hoꝛrible ſcourge and plague, he hath firſt ſet vp a great light: As when he would ſend the Iewes out of their owne countrie into captiuitie in Babylon, he firſt raiſed vp the godly King Hoſia, who ſhould again reſtoꝛe the law, that the people might amend their life, but when they did againe reuolt, God puniſhed them accoꝛding to their deſert. So when he mynded to deſtroy the Egyptians, he made a light to be ſet vp, and preached vnto them by Moſes and Aaron: Moꝛeouer when he would dꝛowne all the woꝛld by the flood, he ſent the Patriarch Noe, but when men did not amende, but became woꝛſe and woꝛſe, ſuch a ſoꝛe and grieuous plague did follow. Likewiſe the fiue cities Sodome and Gomoꝛra togither with the reſt were deſtroyed, foꝛ that they would not heare Lot, who feared God. Wheꝛefoꝛe as ſharpe vengeance ſhall light vpon them alſo, which heare the Goſpell, but do not receiue it: euen as the ſeruaunt here in the Goſpell, is deliuered to the toꝛmentours till he ſhould pay all the dette: which is as much in effect as, that he is compelled to ſuffer puniſhment foꝛ his fault, and is neuer ſaued. Foꝛ vnto ſynne is required death, and when he dieth, he dieth alwayes, neither is there any helpe oꝛ deliuerance remaining. Wheꝛefoꝛe let vs receiue theſe thinges foꝛ our owne admonition: as foꝛ them that will not heare, being hardened and indurate, let them beware of the euell that hangeth ouer them.

God vſeth lenity before he executeth ſeueritie, & firſt warneth before he harmeth.

This is a verie comfoꝛtable text, and ſweete to troubled conſciences, inaſmuch as it containeth in it meere foꝛgeuenes of ſinnes: Againe it ſetteth foꝛth terrible iudgement to the vnmercifull & hard hearted, eſpecially ſeeing that this ſeruaunt is not an Heathen, but had heard the Goſpell, in that he had faith: inaſmuch as the Lord tooke pittie on him, and foꝛgaue him his offences, without doute he was a Chriſtian. Wheꝛefoꝛe this is not the puniſhment of Gentiles, noꝛ of the common ſoꝛt that heare not the Goſpell, but of them that with their eares heare the Goſpell, and with their toung talke of it, but will not expreſſe it in their life. We haue theꝛefoꝛe the ſumme of this text. Whereas the

the Scholemen dispute here, whether synne commeth againe, which was before remitted, I let it passe, for they are ignorant what remission of synnes is: they thinke it is a thing that cleaueth to the hart, and lyeth quietly, when as notwithstanding it is plainly the kingdome of Christ, which endureth for euer without ceassing. For as the sunne neuertheles shineth, although I shut myne eyes: so this mercy seat or forgiuenes of synne standeth alwayes, albeit I fall. And as I againe behold the sunne when I open myne eyes: so I againe haue forgiuenes of synnes, if I ryse againe, and returne vnto Christ. Wherefore let no man bring forgiuenes into such a straite, as these made mē dreame of.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER, TEACHING THAT WE MVST CLEAVE WHOLY to Christ, and looke to obtaine all good thinges through him.

Matth. 9.

Verse 18. WHile Iesus spake vnto the people, behold there came a certaine ruler, and worshipped him, saying: My daughter is now deceased, but come and lay thine hand on her and she shall liue.

19. And Iesus arose and folowed him with his disciples.

20. And behold, a womā which was diseased with an issue of blood twelue yeares, came behinde him, and touched the hemme of his garment.

21. For she said in her selfe, if I may touch but his garment onely, I shalbe whole.
22. Then Iesus turned him about, and seeing her, did say: Daughter, be of good comfort, thy fayth hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole in that same moment.
23. Now when Iesus came into the rulers house, and saw the minstrels and the multitude making noyse,
24. He sayd vnto them, Get you hence: for the mayde is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorne.
25. And when the multitude were put forth, he went in, and tooke her by the hand, and the mayde arose.
26. And this bruit went throughout all that land.

DEarely beloued, ye know that the Gospell is nothing els, but a treatise of the onely person, whose name is Christ. And albeit there be extant many bookes & sundrie treatises cõcerning diuers men, as well of the Gentiles as Christians, yea and of the mother of God, S. Peter, the Angels, and of many other Saincts beside: yet be they not Gospels, but that onely is the syncere Gospell, which setteth forth Christ vnto vs, and what good we must hope for frõ him. Sometime in the Gospell there is mention made of Iohn the Baptist, Marie, and the Apostles, howbeit this is not properly the Gospell, but therefore is it written of them, that it might be more perfectly declared, frõ whẽce Christ should come, and what is his office. So Luke describeth the historie of Iohn the Baptist euen from the beginning, what was done both in his conception and in his natiuitie, he writeth also of the virgine Marie. All which thinges were committed to writing not because of their person, but because of Christes person onely. In the Epistles of S. Paule there is nothing committed to memorie of the Saincts, but all thinges sound plainly of Christ. For God hath so ordained, that all men must de-

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pend on that one man Christ, must hope in him, must repose their trust in him, if they desire to be saued, for he alone is set forth of God to be a reconciliation for vs, as Paule sayth Rom. 3. Hitherto one hath cleaued to this sainct, an other to that, one chose to himselfe S. Marie, an other S. Barbarie, and diuers sectes and sortes of religion did flourish. But Christ was in no price, for his name onely remained. We had many intercessours, all which being neglected we ought to haue cleaued onely to Christ. Hereupon S. Paule sayth, that the Gospell was promised of God by the Prophetes concerning his sonne. He reduceth and bringeth it into such a streight, that in the Gospell nothing is of any importaunce which concerneth not Iesus Christ. He that knoweth this, let him giue thankes to God, that he knoweth where he may seeke for consolation and helpe, and in whom he may repose his trust.

All that will be saued must depend on Christ, & put their hope and trust in him.

Christ in this dayes Gospell is set forth vnto vs, that he is conuersaunt in the myddest of the people, and draweth all the world vnto himselfe with his gentlenes and sweete doctrine, that they maye cleaue vnto him in their heart, that they maye commit themselues to his goodnes, and hope that they shall obtaine of him both spirituall and corporall good thinges. Neither dothe he receiue any thinge of them, vpon whom he bestoweth benefites, nay he obtaineth nothing of them but ignominie and scorning, as is declared in this text. A benefite proceedeth from him, for which he receiueth a mocke and reproch. Nowe the Gospell is preached and offered to the whole world, that we maye learne to know this man well, and how we must be made Christians, and not how we must be made good. Other treatises beside the Gospell teach of those thinges, whereby men may be made good, as the writinges of the Philosophers and the rules of the ciuill lawe. The liues also of the Saincts haue especiall respecte vnto this, that men may imitate them. It belongeth not to the Gospell to make good men, but to make Christian men. For it is farre more excellent to be a Christian, then an honest and good man. A Christian can say nothing of his owne goodnes or righteousnes, for he fyndeth in himselfe nothinge either good or righteous, but he must flie to the righteousnes which is an others, and which commeth vnto him from an other. Hereupon Christ is sette forth vnto vs, as a conti-

Why ỹ Gospell is preached.

nuall fountaine, which alwayes ouerfloweth with meere goodnes and grace, for which he receiueth nothinge of vs, but that the godly do acknowledge so great goodnes and grace, doe giue him thankes for the same, doe prayse and loue him, others in the meane season mocking him, such a reward he receiueth of them.

A Christian whereof so called.

Wherefore one is not therefore called a Christian, for that he worketh much, for there is an other thinge, which is cause hereof, namely for that he receiueth and draweth from Christ. If one receiueth nothing any more of Christ, neither is he any more a Christian, so that the name of a Christian commeth onely by receiuing, and not by giuing or doing. If thou thinke that because of thy workes and deedes thou art a Christian, thou hast euen then lost the name of Christ. Good workes in deede are to be done, counsell thereunto is to be giuen and receiued, but no man is therefore called a Christian, neither is any therefore a Christian. Wherefore if any will more inwardly wepe this name, in this respect onely a Christian is to be acknowledged, inasmuch as he receiueth of Christ alone. Euen as one is called white of the whitenes that is in him, blacke of the blacknes, great of his stature: so a Christian is called of Christ, whom he hath in himselfe, and of whom he receiueth that which is good. Now if one be named a Christian of Christ, he taketh not that name of his owne workes, whereupon it plainly also followeth, that no man is made a Christian by workes. Which if it be true, as it is true and certaine, it shall folow that Orders and Sects doe nothinge pertaine to the name of Christ, neither doe make a Christian. Wherefore they which preach or teach in the Church, and ordaine preceptes, workes, and decrees, are deceiuers, who albeit they pretend a Christian name, yet profite they nothinge, for vnder the colour of that name they endeuour to burden and oppres vs with commaundements and workes. Of workes, giuing thy selfe to fasting and prayers, thou mayest be called abstinent and temperat, but by no meanes a Christian. For although thou dydest laye all thy workes togither, yea and ioynedst the works of all other to thine, yet neither so hast thou Christ, neither art thou therefore called a Christian. Christ is a certaine other more excellent thinge, then either the lawe or mans tradition. He is the sonne of God, who is ready to giue

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onely, not to receiue: when as I am such a one that I do receiue of him, I haue him also, whom if I haue, I am by good right called a Christian.

Moreouer, the Gospel preacheth Christ also to be the greatest and most highly exalted person in the worlo, not that he doth terrifie men, but that he poureth forth all earthly and heauenly good thinges, so that all men must trust in him, must haue their hope reposed in him, and alwayes receiue onely of him. If any synne terrifie me in my conscience, and the preachers of the lawe endeuour to helpe me with their workes, they shall preuaile nothinge with me. For then Christ alone can helpe and none beside him, yea others make the case worse, whether it be Peter, or Paule, or the blessed virgine Marie her selfe the mother of God. For Christ onely performeth all thinges, who in his word, declareth that if I beleeue, my synne is forgiuen me freely, without all both worke and merit, by pure grace through fayth in Christ. Which word when I shall receiue, I receiue also comfort, that my synnes be forgiuen me as well before God as before men, and I therefore giue thankes to God through Christ, which giueth the holy Ghost and his grace vnto me, that sinne may not hurt me, neither here, nor in the last iudgement. If I feare death, and would not die willingly, in this Christ I shall finde comfort and remedie, that I shall not greatly passe for death. If because of the wrath of God I be afraid, he is my Mediator. And to be briefe, he that hath not this Christ, the wrath of God alwaies remaineth ouer him, and in that state he standeth.

A glad conscience how it is obtained.

Wherefore he that desireth to haue a glad conscience, which is not afraid of sinne, death, hell and the wrath of God, must take heede that he repose his trust in this Mediator Christ. For he is a fountaine abounding with grace, which giueth both temporall and eternall life. Endeuour thou to thinke and feele him euen in thy hart to be such a one, then shalt thou obtaine all thinges, for he aboundeth and ouerfloweth, neither can he but giue, flowe, and abound, if that thou canst beleeue. Then also shalt thou be a right Christian, howbeit by receiuing onely of Christ, and not by giuing. It is a verie rich and precious word, which Paule praiseth so greatly, neither can he euer praise it sufficiently, whereby God so gently offereth his sonne, that he maye poure

for the his grace vpon all, which doe not refuse to receiue it. Hereuppon it moreouer foloweth: If soe be that a Christian doeth good workes, whereby he sheweth loue to his neighbour, he is not therefore made a Christian or righteous, but he must needes be a Christian and righteous before. He doeth good workes in deede, but they doe not make him a Christian. The tree bringeth forth and giueth fruite, and not the fruite the tree. Soe none is made a Christian by workes, but by Christ.

Christians what they are.

Hereof now ye may vnderstand, what kynde of people Christians be, namely, that they be a company which cleaue vnto Christ, and are of one spirit and gifte with him. Hereuppon it is that all Christians are alike, neither hath one more of Christ then an other. S. Peter is not better then the Theefe on the crosse: Marie the mother of God doth not excell Marie Magdalen the synnefull woman. There is in deede a difference in outward thinges and doinges, so the worke of the holy virgin Marie was greater, then the worke of Marie Magdalen: Peter had a greater worke then the Theefe, if thou consider the works, but we are not therefore Christians. The holy virgine Marie is not a Christian because of her great worke, for that she did beare Christ so vnspeakeable a treasure in her wombe, as Christ himselfe said to the woman, which cried vnto him from among the people, Luke 11: Blessed is the wombe that bare thee, and the pappes which thou hast sucked: yea rather, sayth he, blessed are they that heare the worde of God and keepe it. In which place thou seest, that he preferreth the faithfull euen aboue his mother. For Christians do therefore beare their name, because they beleeue in Christ. A virgine and a mother are two notable names, howbeit they are nothinge being compared to the true name of the faithfull. Wherefore we are all alike in Christ through faith, albeit S. Peter haue a stronger faith then I, yet mine is as well sayth in Christ as his. For the same Christ is offered of God the father vnto all companies and people, whom he that hath obtained, hath him whole, whether he be strong or weake, for that skilleth not. The woman mentioned in our text, which was troubled so many yeares with her disease, dothe receiue and apprehend Christ as well as the virgine Marie his mother. Wherefore there is one Christian spirite,

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one excelleth with an other in the noblenes of byrth, S. Peter is enforced to call me his brother, and I againe deare be bolde to call him my brother. Yea Christ himselfe is touched with care of vs, and counteth vs for his brethren, as he saide after his resurrection to Marie Magdalen, Joh. 20: I ascende vnto my Father and to your Father, and to my God and your God. And S. Paule calleth Christ the first borne among many brethren. Whereof also he writeth excellently in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, where entreating of false brethren he speaketh thus: Take heede lest by any meanes this power of yours be an occasion of falling to them that are weake. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge, sitte at table in the idols temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weake, be boldened to eate those thinges w' ..e sacrificed to idols? and so through thy knowledge shall the weake brother perish, for whom Christ died. Now when ye sinne so against your brethren, and wounde their weake conscience, ye sinne against Christ. Here thou seest, if a Christian be offended, or euell be done vnto him, the same is done vnto Christ. This therefore is the summe of the whole Gospell, that we maye learne so to knowe Christ, that the name onely doe not remayne, but that we maye knowe that all that we haue, we haue it from him. If we be Christians, we haue all thinges, then God is our father, and we are Lordes of all both heauenly and earthly thinges, which is gotten of vs by no worke be it neuer soe great. 1.Cor.8.9. The summe of the Gospell.

Thou seest nowe how farre they be from the name of Christ, which be vnder the kingdom of the Pope. They that will preach the Gospell must preach nothing els, beside the onely person, which is Christ, not Marie, so farre must they be from preaching the Pope or any worke albeit precious. they must preach & offer Christ onely vnto vs, & none beside him. When now he is preached vnto thee as a iudge (as he shall come in the last day) and how that good workes are to be done of thee, for which thou mayst be rewarded of him, & thou shalt so receiue it, surely without all dout he shalbe vnto thee a iudge and not a sauiour. And if he be so set forth vnto thee, as he was wont to be painted, that his mother sheweth him her pappes, that is properly to preach Satan and not Christ, who giueth onely, and receiueth not. This is

certaine, when thou shalt haue receiued of him, thē good workes do flow forth of their owne accord, being not compelled, as is set forth in this dayes Gospell: wherein moreouer is declared that Christ preacheth the Gospell to the people: now it is not a common worke to preach. For it is a great benefit vnto vs, that he is become our maister and instructer, that he teacheth vs by what meanes we may come to the knowledge of him, this is a parte of his great goodnes and grace. For as long as he was here in the earth, he ceased not to teach, that we might altogether receiue him for the Messias and Sauiour: and by his workes also did helpe and relieue euerie one, when the case so required.

The exceeding gentlenes and boūtifulnes of Christ.

Thou fyndest no man in the Gospell, to whom helpe was denied, or which at any time asked any thinge of the Lord, which was not giuen him. For how many soeuer went vnto him, that were blynde, deafe, lame, sicke of the palsey, had the dropsie, he receiued all, and helped them all according to their desire, and healed them of all kindes of diseases, as Luke sayth: All the whole multitude sought to touch him, for there went vertue out of him, and healed them all. So doeth he also to this woman. The woman heareth him preaching, and perceiueth him to be a bountifull and gracious man, which sheweth himselfe gentle to the whole worlde, whereupon she hath an affection both to loue him, and to cleaue vnto him. For she maketh accompt, forasmuch as he putteth awaye none from him, that he would not denie her his goodnes, wherefore leauing all the Apostles, she casteth both her hearte and confidence vpon Christ alone, and thinketh thus with her selfe: If I may touch but the hemme of his garment, I shalbe whole. She thought no other thinge in her heart, but, certainly he will helpe me, if so be that I shall touch his garment with myne hand, yet hath she not so good a corage, that she dare come before his face, she iudged her selfe more vnworthie, then that she might either talke with him, or looke vpon him, for she knew that she had deserued nothing, and that she had bestowed no good thinge vpon the Lord, hereupon it is that she so behaueth her selfe, she cōmeth behynde his backe, she falleth downe at his feete, and toucheth onely the hemme of his garment. In a summe, here is nothing but meere bashfulnes and want of merit: here is no preparation, here is no worke,

Luke 6. 19.

and

and yet the miserable woman promiseth her selfe much goodnes from the Lord, namely that he would heale her. She had bin diseased with an issue of blood twelue whole yeares, what could she merite thereby? how could she therefore be worthy of any thinge? Neuertheleſſe being unworthie, and hauing merited nothing, she notwithstanding looketh for helpe of Christ, feeling her selfe to haue great neede thereof. And this is a true preparation, both to the grace and goodnes of Christ, when I feele my selfe to stand in neede thereof, and then doth it verie well fall out, when these two come togither, the rich and the poore, Christ and the synner. But it is no small matter for men to be perswaded, that they are poore, and stand in neede of grace. For that commeth to passe verie hardly, Satan also doth not suffer it, but alwayes draweth men backe to workes, that they may not come so farre, as to thinke that they haue neede either of the grace or mercy of Christ.

The woman diseased with an issue of blood.

The text affirmeth that the woman was diseased with an issue of blood twelue whole yeares, and had spent all her substaunce vpō phisitians, and that the more medicines she tooke, the worse alwayes she was. Luke and Marke do not a litle exaggerate and amplifie it, whereby they both signifie, that the more workes be preached, so much the worse is it with vs, and that there commeth nothing vnto vs thereby, but a continuall multiplying of our euell. Our conscience can not be quieted with workes, for albeit some synne be driuen out of the conscience, forthwith there is an other, yea the remedy and work oftentimes do make synne in vs, where there is no synne, vntill suche time as we come to Christ, euē as it was wᵗ this woman, which had bin sick so long, neither had she bin euer helped, if she had not come to Christ, of whom she obtaineth helth without any workes, giuing him nothing, but receiueth onely of him, and suffreth to be giuen vnto her. Nowe here is also declared, how the worde of God is daily to be handled, and without ceassing to be vrged, for there are as yet alwayes found such men, as haue verie troubled and afflicted consciences. For this woman is a type or figure of all men, which are diseased with an issue, that is, which feele there synnes, the issue whereof doeth alwayes runne, neither can it be stayed, for flesh and blood doeth no otherwise, then it is caried with it owne lust and desire. Nowe if that feeling of synne be

Continuall preaching of the word of God verie necessarie.

great, those wretches come forth and endeuour to helpe themselues. then one taketh this worke in hand, an other that, and yet preuaile they nothing from hence so many orders, so many monasteries haue sprong, hereupon so many and so great works haue bin inuented, that they are almost without number. What was the cause of all these? surely euen the synnefull conscience. For we haue thought to saue our soules by these, and to be deliuered wholy from all synnes. But Christ was not there present, for we would giue and not receiue. Wherefore our case became alwayes worse, as it fell out also with this woman, who if she had tried the helpe of all Phisitians, neither yet so could she synde, whereby she might be holpen. So we also beleeued all Phisitians, for whatsoeuer euerie one brought, that we byandby receiued. And was it any meruell? for we desired to be healed and to haue a glad conscience. The Phisitians are the preachers of the Lawe: nowe if any desired to be deliuered from synnes, what did they vnto him? they gaue him, whereby he became onely weaker and feebler, which surely we haue seene and felt to our great euell, namely, how they would haue men to be iustified by workes, & by them to be deliuered from synnes. But it profited nothinge, for we were alwayes made more weake against synne and death, so that there is neuer found in the earth a more desperate sorte of people, then Sacrificing Priestes, Monkes and Uestall virgines, and they whatsoeuer they by that trust in workes: if there did but a litle byle arise vpon them, byandby they must runne to the Poticarie, then is suche tryinge of medecine, suche running and hast, as though they had nowe breathed their last. Neither is any so afrayd of the last iudgement as this people. Which then they verie well shew, when they so deale with workes, that they rest onely vpon them, neither doe perseuer constant in any worke, and the more workes they doe, so much worse is their case, so much more are they cast downe in mynde and become more desperate, so that it falleth out with them as with this woman.

It is a verie goodly similitude, which may most fitly be applied to vs: for we do not onely bestow temporall thinges, but our body also by fasting, chastising, and bearing other hard and intolerable burdens, so that some haue thereby become mad, and destitute of all strength, yea & at the last lost their life. And I my selfe

selfe haue bene such a one, and haue without dout more resorted to medicines then many other. I could not atteine so farre, as to leaue the Popes law. It seemed a hard and a sore matter vnto me to eate flesh on the friday, O good God, how hard a thing was it to me, before I durst attempt to doe that? Wherefore if any will be deliuered from such thinges, and contemne the traditions of the Pope, truely he must haue a stronge foundation of faith, which if he shall not haue, let him looke about him againe and againe before he attempt it. For if faith be wanting, it will fal out with vs as with this woman, who had spent all her substance vpon Phisitians, amending nothing, but rather waxing worse and worse: In like maner all our workes, labours & endeuours shall be lost, all our obedience, with all orders or religions, and whatsoeuer we haue bestowed therein shall be in vaine. Howbeit if we haue faith, we shall at the last see the decrees of the Pope and popish Bishops to be nothing, because of which before we trembled and were troubled, all which did helpe vs so much, as the Phisitians did that good woman, which had bestowed all her substance and riches, yea and her body also, that she might be healed. How many kindes of medicines and syrups thinkest thou did that woman vse? how weake, feeble, & sicke was she oftentimes made with them? yea if she might haue bene healed, it may seeme she would haue taken any medicine, howbeit it profited her nothing, she was afflicted with her disease the space of twelue yeares. How therefore is this miserable woman at the last helped? When she did light vpon a man whose name is Christ, and put her hope and trust in him, she was healed. But who led her to that man? without dout not the Phisitians. For if our Preachers should preach Christ, the marchandize of the Pope together with his decrees would be nothing set by, but rather she heard it of some that was also restored to health, who told her without douting, that there was a certaine man, whom his parents had named Iesus, which is a gentle and good man, which helpeth euery one, and sendeth away none from him whom he helpeth not, and therfore is without dout sent of God, that he may helpe all. Which the woman hauing heard, she leaueth the Phisitians, and maketh hast vnto Christ.

A hard thing to forsake papistrie being once entangled therewith.

So also at this day it falleth out: Not Christ, but workes only are preached, doe this or that, neuertheles it is spred among

The true preaching of Christ calleth from the traditiõs of men to faith & trust in him alone

the people what Christ is, what we must looke for of him, & that he alone must do all things without our workes or merits. This report being heard, we follow him, and lay up these words in the depth of our hart, we leaue the philitians, nothing regarding the Preachers of the law and workes, or their commaundements and traditions, but runne with all desire of hart to this man, which is Christ, saying to the Pope: if I must receiue onely of Christ, how vnwisely haue I delt, that I haue turned so much vnto thee? farewel therfore O Pope, farewell ye beloued Bishops, I neede no more your medicine, workes and merits, precepts and lawes, ye haue grieued me long enough with them, I haue gotten one, which bestoweth vpon me freely, whatsoeuer I payed full deare for vnto you before: he giueth that vnto me without workes and merits, for which I was faine before to bestow my body, strength and helth, and yet could not obtaine it. Fare ye well, I minde to come no more to you hereafter. Christians therefore are made, not by the decrees of the Pope, not by workes, not by the ordinances of men, but by the grace and goodnes of Christ.

We must flie vnto Christ in our distresse.

Wherefore if thou hast a disquieted and a troubled minde and conscience, so that thou art afraid of sinne, dreadest death, or hast some defect otherwise, get thee to that man, & confesse what thou wantest, call vpon him, then surely he will helpe thee: poure out thy hart before him, as the 62. Psalme sayth, and say thus vnto him: beholde here is an emptie vessell which greatly needeth wherwith it may be filled, I beseech thee, O my Lord vouchsafe to fill it, I am weake in faith, I pray thee to strengthen me, I am cold in charitie, do thou make me whot, and feruent, that my loue may extende vnto my neighbour, I haue no firme faith, neither can I sometime trust in God, O Lord helpe me, and encrease my faith and confidence: in thee haue I reposed the treasure of all good thinges, I am poore, thou art rich, and therefore didst thou come, that thou mightest haue mercie on the poore: I am a sinner, thou art righteous, yea I haue aboundance of sinnes, but in thee is all fulnes and grace. When thou shalt once haue learned this, the Popes ordinaunces shall not snare thee, by which thou getteſt nothing, but consumest all that thou hast, like as this woman did. Then wilt thou say: I will choose to my selfe him, of whom I may receiue, vnto whom I neede not giue any thing.

The other Euangelists write concerning this woman, that after

after she was healed, Christ perceiued vertue to haue gone out of him, and turned him about in the preasse, and asked who had touched him, and that his Disciples made aunswere, that the multitude did throng & thrust him, but that the Lord would not be content with that aunswere, but sayd: some one hath touched me: for I perceiue ỳ vertue is gone out of me, I know that some one hath receiued some thing from me. All which the Lorde therefore did, that the faith of the woman might be thankefull vnto him, which he would therefore haue made manifest before all the people, for that nothing is more acceptable vnto him, then that we beleeue and trust in him, & also that the Lorde might by this miracle confirme the faith of the Ruler. Wherefore Marke sayth, that when the woman vnderstood that the Lord knew of her, she feared and trembled, and came and fell downe before him, and tolde him the whole truth, how it fell out with her: whereupon the Lord doth deliuer her and sayth: Goe in peace, & be whole of thy disease. Were not these louing wordes? what great ioy did the woman take here, when as Christ had delt so bountifully with her? This ioy and peace all they obtaine, which repose their whole hope and trust in Christ Iesus. Where this ioy shall be, forthwith workes must needes follow, which may shewe forth this ioy: as also the faith of this woman must needes come to light. For as soone as she had receiued of the Lord, she confessed before all the people, neither was she ashamed to declare, that she had receiued something of him, for which notwithstanding she had giuen nothing. Now, God requireth of vs these works & this giuing of thanks, to wit, that we confes & declare before all men such good things, grace and benefites, that others also may be brought vnto him, & suffer a benefite to be bestowed vpon them, as it was here done. Wherefore Christian life enforceth me to doe good vnto others also, euen as God through Christ hath done good vnto me, but thereby am I not made a Christian, as the woman here is not healed by her confession, for she was healed before any work and confession, but after she had recouered her health, she confesseth Christ, and prayseth him, euen to the commoditie and conuerting of others. We also inasmuch as we are Christians, doe so liue, that one helpeth and pleasureth an other in what thing soeuer he is at any time able. And as this woman was healed before all workes, so we must be made Christians before we doe any worke.

The frute of true hope in Christ.

As the Gospell is set before our eyes in this woman: so is it also set forth in the Daughter of this Ruler. This chiefe ruler of the Sinagogue, whom Marke calleth Jairus, had a strōg faith and confidence, that Christ would raise vp his Daughter. For vnles he had bene of that minde concerning Christ, he had not come vnto him, neither had desired such a thing of him which exceeded the power & strength of nature. Wherefore by this prayer he shewed his faith, which faith being perceiued, the Lorde could not but graunt his desire, wherefore rising forthwith, he went with him, & in this going this historie of the woman came to passe, which had bene diseased of an issue of blood twelue yeares, as we haue now heard. When therefore the Lorde was entred into the Rulers house, he sawe the minstrells and the multitude making nopse, which were there according to the lawe of Moses, and did sounde the trumpet and pipes as in our cuntrie they ringe the bells to gather the people togither. But he commaunded the multitude to go forth, saying: The child is not dead but sleepeth. And they laught him to scorne and mocked him. Which giueth vs to vnderstand, that when it is preached, that Christ is he which saueth, that our workes preuaile nothing, then the world can not conteine it selfe, but that it scorneth & mocketh, for it can not be persuaded, that Christ doth helpe and succour, euen as this people without all dout sayd after this sort: Beholde what an excellent Maister and a goodly Phisitian he is, what could he haue holpen, which knoweth not yet, what it is to sleepe, and what to be dead? This title must needes remayne to the Gospell in the world, that the preaching thereof is counted foolish and contemptible. For Satan can not abide, that honour should be giuen to this Gospel before the world, for it bringeth but smal commoditie to his kingdom, which forasmuch as he perceiueth full well, he practiseth all crafftes and wiles, that he may either altogither hinder it, or at the least make it to preuaile litle with them that be his, whose hartes he hath wholy blinded and possessed, that the light of the glorious Gospell of Christ should not shine vnto them, as S. Paule sayth 2. Cor. 4.

The preaching of the Gospell is contemned and counted foolishnes, of the world

Neither yet can it be, that this preaching of Christ should not be frutefull, forasmuch as it is not vttered in vaine: for albeit it be receiued but of a few, that doth not greatly skill. When therefore Satan perceiueth any thing to be taken from him, and that

that

that preaching is ordained plainly against his kingdom, he doth without delay pursue it, contemne it, and assaile it on euery side, that euen now he is fierce and rageth in the whole world. For the Gospell of Christ ouerthroweth whatsoeuer the world and Satan delight in, and whatsoeuer to the worlde seemeth most holy & goodly. For the worlde imagineth to it selfe such a God, as hath regard to our good workes, and will be pleased with the erecting of Masses and vigiles for them that are departed, with Rosaries as they call them, habit, shauing, and whatsoeuer other trifles are vsed in the Papacie. Now if there come any which bringeth the Gospell, and inueyeth against these vaine toyes of the Pope, and sayth that they are nothing worth, but are meere delusions, inasmuch as they are repugnant to Christ and the Scripture, he is counted a most wicked felow, and therefore must be punished, he is reproued as an heretike and a seducer of the people: so that they burst forth into great wordes and say: wilt thou gouerne all the whole world? doost thou thinke thy selfe the wisest man that is? and were our forefathers foolish and without all vnderstanding? many holy men haue done these workes, and haue preached of them, and wilt thou come, and turne them all to nothing? thou shalt not doe it. Then rage and furie beginneth, yea persecution, slaying and murdering, and the Deuill will seeme to haue a iust cause, howsoeuer the matter goeth. Thus much shall suffize at this time concerning this text. Now ye must take especial heede, that out of the Gospells ye learne throughly, how all things consist in the onely person whose name is Christ, and lay vp this in the depth of your hart, that a Christian hath his name of Christ. For I know how much it auaileth both in tentation and in aduersitie, to hold that fast. Let vs now by prayer call for the grace of God, that at the last we may with most earnest zeale and harty affection embrace true Christianitie,

Amen.

Satan a most grieuous enemie to the preaching of the Gospell.

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER VPON THE GOSPELL ON SAINCT THOMAS DAY,

CONCERNING THE VVORKS VVHICH Christ hath wrough for vs, wherin is contained a moſt ſweete conſolation againſt the Law, Sinne, Death, and Satan.

Ioh. 20.

Verſe 24. THomas one of the twelue, called Didimus, was not with them whē Ieſus came.

25. The other Diſciples therfore ſayd vnto him, we haue ſeene the Lord; but he ſaid vnto them: Except I ſee in his hands the print of the nayles, and put my finger into the print of the nayles, and put mine hand into his ſide, I will not beleeue it.

26. And eyght dayes after agayne his Diſciples were within, & Thomas with them. Thē came Ieſus when the dores were ſhut, and ſtoode in the middes, and ſayd: Peace be vnto you.

27. After ſayd he to Thomas, Put thy finger here, and ſee myne handes, & put forth thyne hand, and put it into my ſide, and be not faithles, but faithfull.

28. Then Thomas aunſwered and ſayd vnto him: Thou art my Lord and my God.

29 Ieſus

29. Iesus sayd vnto him: Thomas because thou hast seene me, thou beleeuest, blessed are they, that haue not seene and haue beleeued.

The summe of this Gospell.

1 THomas doth not beleeue that Christ is risen from the dead, but when he seeth and feeleth him.

2 The Disciples beleue not without manifest signes. But blessed are they that haue not seene, but doe beleeue the word onely.

3 It is a great matter to know Christ God and man. He which attaineth to this knowledg of Christ, feareth neither sinne nor death, neither the deuill nor hell: briefly he is quiet from all anguish & tentation. For he hath a greater and mightier then he which is in the world, as Iohn sayth in his first Epistle chap. 4.

The exposition of this Gospell.

I Know nothing more certaine concerning S. Thomas, then that which this Gospell mentioneth of him. Other things which are written of him in the booke of Legends, are most impudent lyes. And albeit they were partly true, yet haue they no authoritie, neither make vs any thing the better. Wherfore we will leaue them vntouched, & speake something of this Gospel, which shal be more profitable & necessary for vs then all those Legends. The former part of this Gospell fell out about the euentyde of the Passeouer, when two had returned from Emmaus, & shewed vnto the other Disciples, that the Lorde was risen againe. The latter part fell out the eight day after the Passeouer. It is meruelous how comfortable this Gospell is, shewing vnto you, the frutes of faith, namely peace, and hope, as Paule sayth Rom. 5: being iustified therefore by faith, we haue peace toward God, through our Lord Iesus Christ. But now we will entreat in few wordes, what this is that the Lord sheweth to his Disciples his handes and his feete, whereby is declared vnto vs, what commo-

ditie we haue by Christ, whereunto he prouoketh vs, and what we must loke for of him. It is engraffed in the harts of all men as it were by nature, to haue a certen wil to be honest & godly, & euery one thinketh how he may come to saluation, wherby it hath come to passe, that one hath inuented this thing, an other that, being verily persuaded, that thereby he should make God fauourable vnto him, and obtaine heauen, but none such at any time hath stoode in ꝑ right way, forasmuch as all haue had this drift, that they might procure Gods fauour by deedes and good workes. Notable Doctors also and holy fathers haue written & taught many things, how we might attaine vnto godlines. About this they haue miserably troubled them selues, but as we see, and to our notable losse haue felt, they haue done litle. Wherefore it is exceeding necessary, that some sound knowledge be had hereof, wherby we must endeuour to true godlines, forasmuch as it is a thing of no small importance. For he that is deceiued here, loseth the summe and chiefe point of all Christianitie: hereof therefore we must nowe speake somewhat.

True & sound righteousnes consisteth not in our owne workes, but in the workes of an other. Take an example hereof: One buildeth temples, an other for religions sake goeth to S. James, to Aquisgrane, to Rome, to the holy sepulcher, the third pineth him selfe with fastings, prayeth, weareth a cowle, goeth bare foote, or worketh some other such worke whatsoeuer it be, these are our owne workes. God hath not commaunded them, but men and hypocrites, iustifiers of them selues haue inuented them, and haue thought that they are precious good workes, and greatly esteemed of God, sweetely persuading them selues, that they are by them deliuered from sinnes, and that God is pacified towards them. But these workes chosen of their owne proper will, are nothing worth at all, neither can stand, forasmuch as they proceede not of faith, yea they are sinnes, as Sainct Paule saith Rom. 14: VVhatsoeuer is not of faith, is sinne. These our workes therefore are defiled and vncleane in the sight of God, yea he doth abhorre and loathe them. Wherefore if we will haue to doe with God, we must not ascend trusting to our owne workes, but to the workes of an other. But which are those workes of an other, that are allowed of God? Truely the workes of our Lorde Iesus Christ, whom God the father sent downe from heauen, that by his death

True righteousnes is obtained, not by our owne workes, but by the works which Christ hath wrought for vs.

and

and passion he might satisfie for our sinnes. This satisfaction fel out vpon this occasion: We were subiect to great daunger, grieuous tyrannes had power ouer vs, which day and night without ceasing did vexe vs. The law which God gaue vnto man, did vrge vs, and required many thinges of vs, which we were not able to perfourme, and therefore it condemned vs. Sinne also did lye vpon vs as a heauy burden which the lawe did oftentimes make greater & greater. Death went about to deuour vs, inasmuch as it is the wages of sinne, Satan also endeuoured to throw vs downe head long to hell, inasmuch as he would punish vs for our sinnes committed: all thinges were full of trembling and anguish.

The miserable case wherein man was before he was deliuered by Christ.

God taking pitie vpon this so great calamity, sent his only begotten sonne, and that of his mere grace & goodnes, without our desert, that he might deliuer vs out of so great tyrannie, which he mightely did after this sorte: He satisfied the law, and fulfilled it perfectly. For he loued God with all his heart, and with all his soule, & with all his strength: he loued his neighbour also as himselfe, in these the whole law and the Prophetes do consist. Nowe whatsoeuer Christ did, it consisted in these two. He loued God, inasmuch as he obeyed his will, he tooke vpon him the nature of man, and perfourmed in all obedience those thinges that were enioyned him of the father, as Paul saith Phil. 2: He became obedient to the father vnto the death, euen the death of the crosse. Secondly, he loued his neighbour: for all ỹ workes which he did in the earth, tended vnto this end, that he might therby profit his neighbour, and therefore he so loued his neighbour, that he euen died for him, as he saith himselfe to his disciples Joh. 15: Greater loue then this hath no man, when any man bestoweth his life for his frends: S. Paul doth more set forth this, saying, for his enemies, when he writeth thus Rom. 5: But God setteth out his loue towards vs, seeing that while we were yet sinners Christ died for vs. Forasmuch then as Christ hath so fulfilled ỹ law, it could not accuse him, neither was sinne of any force with him. He set vpon it, and did preuaile ouer it, and swallowed it vp, it was enforced to be extinguished of him, no otherwise then a sparke of fire in the most wide sea. For in him was nothing but mere righteousnes. Death also came, and went about to deuour him, it deuoured him in deede, but it could not digest him, it was enforced to peeld him vp againe, yea and this deuouring was an vtter dis-

Christ hath fulfilled the law, preuailed against sinne, ouercome death and vanquished Satan.

commoditie to death, for the case being quite altered, Christ deuoured death it selfe. For it had set vpon him, against whome it had no right, forasmuch as not a whit of sinne did appeare in him. Where sinne is not, there death hath nothing to doe, as Saincte Paule sayth 1.Cor.15: The stinge of death is sinne, with this it killeth, otherwise it should be dull, and haue no strength. Satan also made a triall of his strength in him, but in vaine, and to his owne griefe, for he layde handes on him, with whome he had nothing to doe. The wretch was ouercome in this conflict, and went away with shame, as Christ sayth, Joh.14: The Prince of this world commeth, and hath nought in me. Hell also did open his mouth, and would haue deuoured Christ, but contrariwise it was deuoured of him. And so in this conflict the Law, Sinne, Death, Satan and hell were vanquished, ouer all which he triumphed & gloried with great pompe, as Paule sayth Col.2.

The beleeuers by faith enioy the workes of Christ as their owne.

All these thinges were not onely done for our commoditie, but also if we beleeue in this Lorde Christ, they are giuen vnto vs. For whatsoeuer he hath, it serueth for vs, yea he him selfe is ours, as Paule sayth Rom.8. God spared not his owne sonne, but gaue him for vs all to death, how shall he not with him giue vs all thinges also? So that I may boldly glorie of all victorie, which he obtained ouer the law, sinne, death, the deuill, and may chalenge to my selfe all his workes, euen as if they were myne owne, and I my selfe had done them, so that I beleeue in Christ. Otherwise his workes shall profitte me nothinge at all, if they were not giuen vnto me. These are the workes of an other which doe commende vs before God, and saue vs. Our owne workes shall doe nothing, we are weaker, then that we can resist euen the least sinne, so farre is it of that we are able to encounter with death, Satan, and hell. Wherefore when the Lawe shall come, and accuse thee, that thou dooste not obserue it, sende it vnto Christ, and say: There is that man which hath fulfilled the lawe, to him I cleaue, he hath fulfilled it for me, and hath giuen his fulfilling vnto me: when it heareth these thinges, it will be quiet. If sinne come, and woulde haue thee by the throte, sende it vnto Christ, and saye: As much as thou mayst doe agaynst him, so much right shalt thou haue agaynst me: for I am in him, and he is in me. If death creepe vppon thee, and attempte to deuoure thee, saye vnto it: Good Maistres

How a Christian may notably comfort him self against the law, sinne, death, Satan.

death,

death, dooſt thou knowe this man? come and byte out his tooth, haſt thou forgotten howe litle thy byting preuayled with him once? goe too if it be a pleaſure vnto thee, encounter with him agayne. Thou hadſt perſuaded thy ſelfe, that thou ſhouldeſt haue preuayled ſomewhat agaynſt him, when he did hange betwene two theeues, & dyed an ignominious death, which was counted curſed both before God and the worlde. But what diddſt thou gayne therebye? Thou didſt byte in deede, but it turned worſt to thy ſelfe. I pertaine to this man, I am his, and he is myne, and where he abydeth, there alſo will I abyde. Thou couldeſt hurte him nothinge, wherefore alſo let me alone. After the ſame ſorte if the Deuill, if hell come violently vppon thee, and trouble thee, ſende them vnto Chriſt, and thou ſhalt eaſily make them to ceaſe.

The inestimable commoditie which the faithfull enioy through Christ.

And thus ye ſee what Chriſt is vnto vs, namely ſuch a man as is giuen vnto vs of God, that he might extinguiſh ſinnes, vanquiſh death, deſtroy hell, ouercome the Deuill, and all theſe for our commoditie. If he had not done this, nor giuen vnto vs theſe thinges, we had bene for euer vnder the curſe of the law, vnder ſinne, vnder death, vnder the deuill, and vnder hell. God hath deliuered vs from theſe by that Chriſt. Wherefore S. Paul ſaith out of the Prophet Oſee 1. Cor. 15: Death is ſwalowed vp into victorie. O death where is thy ſtinge? O hell where is thy victorie? The ſtinge of death is ſinne, and the ſtrength of ſinne is the law. But thankes be vnto God, which hath giuen vs victorie through our Lorde Ieſus Chriſt. Hereof we may eaſily vnderſtand, what kinde of workes thoſe be, which doe make vs entire and righteous before God. Surely they are the workes of an other, and not our owne workes choſen of our ſelues. Wherefore the whole Papacie falleth here, with all the moſt precious and holy workes thereof, which hath this drift onely, that miſerable, wretched, and blinded men may be perſuaded, that they obtayne heauen by their merits, and their owne workes. Hereuppon haue ſpronge ſo many orders, that they can not almoſt be numbred, of which one ſtriued to be holier then an other, according as they exerciſed harder, greater, and weightier workes. But this their miſerable labour, anguiſh, prayers, faſtinges, chaſtiſing of the body, and ſuch like, were vaine workes, and of no value at all, neither had they ſo much power, that they were able

We are iuſtified before God by no workes or merits of our owne, but onely by the workes of Christ.

to take away so much as euen the least sinne, which they call veniall. They were altogither vnmindfull of this saying Esay 29, which the Lord repeteth Matth. 15: This people draweth nere vnto me with their mouth, & honoureth me with their lippes, but their heart is farre of from me. But in vaine they worshippe me, teaching such doctrines, as are nothing els but the precepts of men. Hereupon now thou maist gather with thy selfe, that all holy men, although they be exceeding holy, yet do obtaine saluation, not by their owne holines, merites or workes. And not so much as Mary her selfe the mother of God, was made righteous & holy in respect of her virginitie, or in that she was the mother of God, but saluation hath come vnto all by Jesus Christ, as by the workes of an other. Wherfore this is diligently to be noted, that our felicitie doth not consist in our owne workes, but in the workes of an other, namely of Christ Jesus our Sauiour, which we obtaine through only faith in him.

This also the historie of this Gospell seemeth to signifie, when as the Lorde sheweth to his disciples, but specially to Thomas, his handes & feete. By which deede he declareth, that it was necessary, that those handes and feete should do these things, & that no other workes, that is, their owne, & not the workes of an other, do pertaine vnto saluation. For in the Scriptures by handes and feete workes & conuersation are signified. These hands and feete Christ doth as yet eftsoones shew to vs & say: Behold, I am that onely man, whose workes & conuersation are of force with God, thou shalt labour in vaine with thine owne workes, thine owne righteousnes maketh nothing hereunto, it hath an other end. If thou be righteus, it is profitable to thee among mē, here in earth thou hast the glory & praise thereof, as Paul sayth Rom. 4. But before God this thy righteousnes is of no estimation, thou must set in place thereof an other, namely mine, this God my father doth allow. For I haue deliuered thee from sinnes, death, the deuell, hell, & from all euell, thou shouldest neuer haue escaped out of these by thine owne power, but hadst lyen as yet most deepely drowned in them. I haue appeased the wrath of God, and of an angrie iudge, haue made him, a gentle, mercifull and gracious father, beleeue this and it goeth well with thee, thou art then safe, entire, and righteous. Beware that thou presume not to deale before God with thine owne workes, but if thou wilt do any thing

Handes and feete what they commonly signifie in the Scripture.

thing with him, creepe into me, put on me, and thou shalt obtaine of my Father, whatsoeuer thou desirest and askest, as he him selfe sayth vnto his Disciples Ioh. 16: Verely, verely I say vnto you, whatsoeuer ye shall aske the Father in my name, he will giue it you. Wherefore as from the beginning sinne which was an others, hath bene deriued vnto vs from Adam, for neither I, nor thou haue eate of the apple: so also by the righteousnes of an other we must be restored vnto righteousnes and integrity. This other is Christ Iesus, by whose righteousnes and workes we are all saued, as I haue nowe sufficiently declared. This S. Paule hath very pithily comprehended euen in one sentence, where 1. Cor. 1. he sayth thus: Christ Iesus is made vnto vs of God, wisedom, and righteousnes, and sanctification, & redemption, that, according as it is written, he that reioyceth, let him reioyce in the Lord. And Rom. 4. he sayth: Iesus Christ was deliuered to death for our sinnes, and is risen againe for our iustification. In these two litle sentences are briefly comprised, and ioyned together, whatsoeuer thinges we must looke for from Christ.

Howbeit all these thinges are enioyed by faith, for he that is without faith, to him they are vnpossible to be comprehended, yea they are counted foolishnes to reason & to the world, as Paul sayth 1. Cor 1: Christ vnto the Iewes is euen a stumbling block, and vnto the Grecians, foolishnes, that is, when Christ is preached, that he is our righteousnes, that saluation commeth vnto vs by him, and that by him we are made the children of euerlasting life, without our owne workes and righteousnes, then those holy men, and iustifiers of them selues are offended, no otherwise then the Iewes. Moreouer to the prudent and wise men of this world, it seemeth foolishnes and a certaine ridiculous thing, that a man being fastned to the crosse and put to death, doth performe these thinges. Whatsoeuer therefore is counted righteous, holy, wise and prudent in the eyes of the world, it is offended and stumbleth at this Christ. But, saith Paul moreouer, Vnto thē which are called, both of the Iewes & Grecians, we preach Christ, the power of God, and the wisedom of God. He sayth also Rom. 1. The Gospell of Christ is the power of God vnto saluation to euery one that beleeueth, to the Iew first and also to the Grecian; For by it the righteousnes of God is reuealed from faith to faith, as it is written Haba. 2: The iust shall liue by faith. Wherefore

The preaching of Christ is cōted foolishnes of the vnbeleeuers, but of the faithfull the power and wisedom of God.

the Lord sayth very well to the Disciples of Iohn: Blessed is he that shall not be offended in me. So thou seest now plainly, that this faith which we haue in Christ, commeth by the preaching of the Gospell, as Paule affirmeth Rom. 10: Faith is by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Here, here I say doth all the force consist, by the word of God, not by the worde of man. The word of God doth these thinges, not when we publish indulgences, or preach of workes, as hitherto (alas) it hath bene done, to our exceeding losse, as well in the good thinges of the body as of ỹ soule. We made no account of goods which we bestowed plentifully, vnles we had afflicted our body with fastings, chastisement, pilgrimages, and such like trifles. In deede these thinges had bene to be graunted and borne, if they had not with a false confidence in such doing, so miserably and lamentably led vs away & seduced vs from a true faith & confidence in God through Christ. But praise be vnto God, that we haue for the most parte perceiued such delusions. For the world was so full of this miserie and preaching, that it did almost ouerflow, which surely came by the vengeance and wrath of God, for that we contemned his word, and followed mens fables, yea our owne wittes and opinions. Then we were in so great blindnes, that we did almost without difference beleeue euery man, what kind of worke soeuer he brought and gloriously set forth. From these deceitfull follies our consciences are nowe deliuered and set free, but no man doth so much as once giue thanks to God therefore. If we shal be contempteously negligent, a more grieuous miserie shall light vpon vs then this was. Neither should that come vnto vs vndeseruedly, forasmuch as we doe greatly procure these euills against our selues by our vnthankefulnes. When as before we gaue with so great aboundance and plentye, that by our liberalitie they were made almost Lordes of the world, nowe hardly six or seuen poore men are maintained in a citie, yea nowe the Minister of a Parish Church hath not sufficient wherewith to liue. Howbeit doe not impute this peruerse kind of liuing to the Gospell, as our aduersaries nowe impudently doe. It is not meete, that thou suffer thy poore neighbour by thee to neede: Yea rather the whole Gospel doth specially vrge this, that thou haue a care of thy neighbour, and that thou be seruiceable toward him, that thou help him both with thy counsell, and substance, euen as God hath holpen and

instructed

instructed thee.

Such a one without dout he that is endued w̄ true faith sheweth him selfe: for he bursteth forth, and behaueth him selfe so toward others, as he hath tried God towardes him selfe, and as he desireth to be done to him selfe, if he were prest with pouertie, anguish, and necessitie. God needeth not our good worckes, our prayers, fastings, and buildings of temples, founding of Masses, doe displease him, he requireth not our sacrifices, but rather as Esay sayth, hateth and abhorreth them. He is content with this one thing, that we acknowledge him for our God, trust in him, & giue him thankes, as he sayth Psal. 50: Heare, O my people, & I will speake, I my selfe will testifie against thee O Israeil: for I am God euen thy God. I will not reproue thee, because of thy sacrifices, or for thy burnt offerings: because they were not alvvay before me. I vvill take no bullocke out of thy house, nor he goates out of thy foldes. For all the beasts of the forest are mine, and so are the cattels vpon a thousand hils. I knovv all the foules vpon the mountaines, and the vvild beasts of the field are in my sight. If I be hungrie, I vvill not tell thee: for the vvhole vvorlde is myne and all that is therein. Thinkest thou that I vvill eate bulles flesh, and drinke the blood of goates? Offer vnto God thankes giuing, and pay thy vovves vnto the most highest. And call vpon me in the time of trouble, so vvill I deliuer thee, and thou shalt prayse me. But God sendeth vs douneward with our worcks to our neighbours, to the miserable, afflicted, & them that be voyde of comfort. It is our partes to helpe them, to comfort them, to teach and instruct them. And whatsoeuer benefit we shall bestow vpon them, that we shall bestow vpon God & his Christ, as he shall say in the last day: V Vhatsoeuer ye haue done vnto one of the least of these my brethren, he haue done it vnto me. Thus ye now haue heard, that we are iustified and made righteous by the worckes of an other, namely, by the worckes of Christ, which we enioy onely by faith: the same faith charitie doth naturally accompany, whereby we doe so to our neighbour, as we acknowledge that God hath done vnto vs. Herof ye haue elsewhere heard more: here we will now make an ende, and call for the grace of God.

The faithful man exerciseth charitie toward his neighbour.

Matth. 25. 40

A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER VPON THE GOSPELL ON SAINCT MATTHIAS DAY.

Matth. 11.

Verse 25. AT that time Ieſus aunſwered and ſaid: I giue thee thankes O Father, Lord of heauen & earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe thinges from the wiſe and men of vnderſtanding, and haſt opened them vnto children.

26. It is ſo, O Father, becauſe thy good pleaſure was ſuch.

27. All thinges are giuen vnto me of my Father: & no man knoweth the Sonne but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father but the Sonne, and he to whom the Sonne wil reueale him.

28. Come vnto me all ye that are wearie & laden, & I will refreſh you.

29. Take my yoke on you and learne of me: for I am meeke and lowlie in hart: and ye ſhall find reſt vnto your ſoules.

30. For my yoke is eaſie, and my burden is light.

The ſumme of this Goſpell.

1 REaſon is not capable of the Goſpell. For as Paul 1. Cor. 2. ſayth: The natural man perceiueth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishnes vnto him:

him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. *Wherefore when reason seeketh saluation in worldly wisedome and foolishnes, it findeth it not.*

2 *Christ calleth them children here, which trust not to their owne wisedome and righteousnes, but do beleeue onely.*

3 *As children onely do obtaine saluation, so the Father also can not be knowen, vnles he be reuealed by Christ: that is, our wisedome doth not know God the father. But when as through fayth we are taught and instructed in bearing the crosse, then the power of God becommeth known vnto vs. Therefore also he afterward comforteth them, vpon whom the crosse is layd, saying:* My yoke is easie, and my burden light.

The expositiō of the text.

THis text toucheth as it were, the verie pith and marrow of the Gospel. Other places of Scripture wherein the miracles and doinges of Christ are rehearsed, haue not so much cōfort as those, in which those sermons of Christ to the people are conteined, wherein he doth so louingly teach vs, and allure vs to himselfe. I am not so certaine of the fauour, which I see shewed to others in working miracles, as if I haue the plaine wordes before myne eyes. It is a farre greater comfort also vnto me, to heare such louing admonitions and allurements, then the preaching of miracles: Albeit they also confirme my fayth, and are examples, that, as he hath holpen them, so also he will helpe me. Moreouer this Gospell entreateth of the knowledge of God the father, and of Christ his sonne, shewing also whereof such knowledge doth consist. Now that the meaning thereof may be well knowne, it is requisite to vnderstād aright these two words, wisemen, and children or babes. But lest when we heare it, we say: this pertaineth nothing to vs, it is spokē to others, as the Iewes said to the Prophets, which referred all thinges to the Gentiles, the wordes going before do sufficiently shew, vnto whom, or of whom these wordes of Christ are spoken. For before he speaketh of them that contemne the Gospell, not vouchsafeing to embrace it, whose dutie notwithstanding especially was to embrace it, inasmuch as they would seeme alone to be them, that were occu-

pied in the word of God, and were to be counted for the people of God. Of such he sayeth thus: Whereunto shall I liken this generation? it is like vnto litle children which sit in the markets, and call vnto their fellowes, and say: we haue piped vnto you, and ye haue not daunced: we haue mourned vnto you, and ye haue not lamented. Which the Lord applieth to himselfe, and vnto Iohn the Baptist: as if he would say: we haue preached vnto you the Gospell: Iohn with a certaine seueritie and austeritie, but I with verie great clemencie and gentlenes. But ye cõtemne our preaching and will not receiue it, ye shall at the last feele without dout to your great euell, what it is to despise the word of God. This is verie true, howsoeuer thou preachest to the people, whether thou be sayre spoken or seuere, gentle or vngentle, they will alwayes seeme to haue some cause or other to complaine of thee.

These the Lord calleth here wise, and men of vnderstanding, to these the Gospell is hyd. He meaneth not here those wise men, which are truly wise in diuine matters. For it is a great commendation, if one be worthy to be called wise and prudent. True wisedom is nothing els but the knowledge of God, to wit, when as I know what we must thinke of God, and do vnderstand his will. But prudence signifieth abilitie and knowledge to iudge of worldly thinges, what is right or wrong, which Paule often ioyneth togither, especially in his Epistle to the Ephesians chap. 1. and in his Epistle to the Colossians chap. 1. Of such wisedome Christ speaketh not here, but of worldly wisedome, which puffeth vp men, and excludeth the true wisedome of God. We are all of this disposition by nature, effsoones to rise against the wisedome of God.

True wisedome what it is.

Prudence.

That is called good, by the instinct of humane wisedome, which bringeth pleasure, honour, and profite, but those thinges that are contrarie to these, as affliction, dishonour, losse, those are called euill. For mans nature can seeke nothing els at all, but those things that are his owne, that which pleaseth and profiteth him, that he doth especially like: But that which displeaseth him, he counteth the worst of all thinges, although it be the best. Wherefore as I haue saide, the Lord speaketh here of those wise and prudent men, which with their owne wisedom striue against the wisedome of God. Worldly wisedome seemeth to it selfe to

Humane or worldly wisdome.

be

be so great, that is it not content to rule onely these worldly and temporall thinges, but taketh also vpon it selfe to haue the ouersight of heauenly things, it alwayes sercheth out and imagineth some new thing, euen in spirituall and diuine matters. So mans owne wisedome hath inuented shauen crownes and cowles, & almost all that, wherein the papacie consisteth, euerie one hath chosen his proper worke to himselfe, this man hath inuented this, an other hath inuēted that, and if this be abolished, and doth not greatly please, byandby they synde out some other thing, as (alas) we haue seene, and do as yet see, neither is there any measure in these trifles, whereupon it commeth, that we can hardly away with the word of God and the truth, but are alwayes delighted to inuent some new thing. For truly this is certaine, as often as we ordaine a new worship of God contrarie to the word of God, we are byandby blynded, and fall from errour to errour, then which calamitie none greater can come vnto vs. Wherefore Paule 2. Thess. 2. sayth: Therefore God shall send them strong deluſiō, that they should beleeue lies, that all they might be damned which beleeued not the truth, but had pleasure in vnrighteousnes. Yea and at the last they become so blynde, that they vnderstand nothing at all of God, as it is in the 14. Psal. The foole hath sayd in his heart, there is no God. For it can not be that the naturall man, which consisteth of flesh & blood, and is not instructed by the spirit of God, should iudge and vnderstand those thinges which are of God, as Paule 1. Cor. 2. witnesseth: The naturall man perceiueth not the thinges of the Spirite of God: for they are foolishnes vnto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually decerned. He which wil reade more hereof, let him peruse the first chapter of the Epistle of Paule to the Romanes, there shall he plainly enough perceiue, what blyndenes is, and what punishment doth ensue, if the word of God beinge neglected, we folowe our one inuentions and counsels.

All which we see in our spirituall monkes, nunnes, and sacrificing priestes, and do too truly trie it. God graunt that they may at the last repent, and giue vnto God his glorie. S. Paule sayth there of the Gentiles, that they turned the glorie of the incorruptible God to the similitude of the image, not onely of a corruptible man, but also of birdes, and foure footed beastes, and of

creeping thinges. So do our Papists also, yea and much more foolishly and madly then the Gentiles: for they make vnto themselues a good which is delighted with a shauen crowne, with cowels, with eating of flesh and fish, &c. Wherefore God hath giuen them vp through their hearts lusts vnto vncleannes, as he did the Gentiles, and that so filthily, that it is better to conceale it, then to rehearse it. For if such filthie and wicked thinges were committed among the Gentiles, which had many wiues and many concubines, what would not these spirituall men commit, so is it wont to come to passe, where Satan beareth the swaie, and the word of God is wrested to serue mens affections. Briefly which haue forbidden the vse of women and matrimonie? which euerie man may assuredly perswade himselfe to be so, yea these thinges are so knowen and vndoutedly true, that children in the stretes speake and sing of them. Now this is not to be vnderstood of spirituall men onely, but euen the vulgar sort and common multitude do liue so, when the word of God is not admitted. As we see citizens to vtter counterfet wares, marchants to deceiue in selling marchandice, and so many craftie practizes, so many deceits in subtill dealing, so much regard of vsurie and priuate profit, that it can not be rehearsed. As yet they endeuour againe to bring in the Masse, to set vp their tapers &c: being perswaded that God is pacified with such trifles, reuoluing this onely in their myndes, that their fame may remaine vntouched and vnhurt in the world, howsoeuer they agree with God. Of such wise and prudent men Christ speaketh here in the Gospell, which heare the Gospell in deede, and see miracles, but it profiteth them nothing, forasmuch as their heart is not touched. Now Christ sayth thus:

Verse 25. I giue thee thankes O Father, Lord of heauen and earth, becausse thou hast hid these thinges from the wise and men of vnderstanding, and hast opened them vnto children:

Verse 26. It is so, O Father, becausse thy good pleasure was such.

Christ speaketh not here of verie children: there may be some notable doctor, whom he calleth a childe in this place. Contrariwise

wise there may be a rusticall felow, whom he calleth here wise and prudent. In the eight Psal. Dauid also calleth these infants and children, when he sayth: Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies. They surely by whom God ordained strength against his enemies, which should extoll his glorie through the whole world, were not babes or children in verie deede. Those therefore the Lord calleth children here, which compt their owne workes for nothing, attribute nothing to their owne wisedome, make no thing of themselues, but thinke God onely to be wise and of vnderstanding. Wherefore they are humble and lowly, and how great soeuer they are, do submit themselues to God, of whom onely they suffer themselues to be taught. Now other be ouer wise, and will learne nothing of God, yea they presumptuously take to themselues iudgement and censure ouer the doctrine and workes of God, whereof thou mayste read in the first and second chapter of the Epistle to the Corinthians. Wherefore Christ sayth Luke 16: The children of this world are in their generation wiser then the children of light. But the foolish children of light are of greater estimation before God, then the wise children of this world. Of these children the Lord speaketh: Thou hast hid them from the wise and men of vnderstanding, and hast reuealed them to babes. For the wise and prudent know not these thinges, but the children and fooles know them. How commeth it to passe that the wise know them not? because thou hast hidden them from them. How do the children know them? because thou hast reuealed them. What he meaneth hereby, we may gather of those thinges that were spoken before, to wit that he had preached the Gospell of the kingdome of God in many cities of Iudea, as in Chorazin, Bethsaida, and in his owne citie Capernaum, which cities their owne wisedome being a hinderance and lette vnto them, did not receiue the foolish preaching of the Gospell. The Gospel is a good and ioyfull message, which teacheth me to know the glorie of God, by which knowledge I obtaine pardon of my synnes, and life eternall: As Christ sayth to his father in the Gospell of John chap. 17: This is life eternal, that they know thee to be the onely very God, and Iesus Christ whom thou hast sent. He sayth also in this Gospell: No man knoweth the Sonne but the Father, neither knoweth any man

Whom the Lord calleth here children or babes.

The Gospell a ioyful message.

the Father but the Sonne, and he to whom the Sonne will reueale him. Here he speaketh of the knowledge both of the Father and of the Sonne. To whom this is reuealed, he knoweth, and obtaineth eternal life. But the Father hath hid these thinges from the wise and prudent, that they may not know neither the Father nor the Sonne, and hath reuealed them to children, they haue the knowledge both of the Father and the Sonne, and so do obtaine euerlasting life.

Moreouer, if these thinges be thus, as they be in deede, what shall become of free will? Seeing thou seest such hainous and wicked thinges to be committed in the bodies, as it is written Rom. 1. go thy wayes now, and glorie of free will. But this is a goodly free will, to liue in such a filthie life, which is altogether vnworthy of a man, which is vnknowen euen among beastes that are without reason. Howbeit it is wont so to come to passe, when God forsaketh vs. As soone as we are forsaken of God, by and by Satan commeth, and erecteth his kingdome in vs, wherein nothing els but such wickednesses are committed, which notwithstanding are so craftely coloured, and commended with such a pretence of honestie, that it seemeth to be a most holy, yea and an angelike life. What I pray you can mans strength do here? whereby some go about to bring to passe many thinges, sweetely perswading themselues that they shall ascend vp into heauen thereby. But thou hearest here that Christ affirmeth, that the Father doth reueale these thinges: also that it is the good pleasure of the Father that it should be so. Whereby truly he taketh away all the merits of man, here no satisfactions profit, here is no respect of workes, it is done by the wil and good pleasure of the Father. For he respecteth not the person, as it appeareth before ꝓ world. He doth not contemne and reiect the synner, albeit he come laden with sinnes. After the same sort Christ saith to his disciples Luke 12: Feare not litle flocke, for it is the Fathers pleasure to giue you the kingdome. This the hypocrites and iustitiaries can not abyde, yea they are driuen vnto furie, senselesnes, and madnes, when they see simple receiuers of custome and verie publicans to go before them into the kingdome of heauen, they themselues with their holines, & goodly and plausible workes to the world, being excluded: whom would not this driue vnto madnes? who would not take it grieuously, that he himselfe and his thinges

What state they come into, whom God forsaketh.

should

shoulde be in such a case, and nothing at all counted of? But what shouldest thou do, or what shouldest thou murmur? The good pleasure of God is such, to whom he vouchsaueth to open, to him they shalbe opened: and from whom he hideth, from him they are hidden, which compt as vndoutedly true: And marke well that Christ sayth here, It is so, O Father, because thy good pleasure was such, thy good pleasure I say, before þ world was made, as S. Paule sayth Ephes. 1: God hath chosen vs in Christ before the foundations of the world were layd, that we should be holy and without blame before him in loue, who hath predestinate vs, to be adopted through Iesus Christ in himselfe, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the prayse of the glorie of his grace, wherewith he hath made vs freely accepted in his beloued. Here all merit is excluded, wherefore let it not come into thy mynde, that thou shalt obtaine any thing here by thy deserts, neither let thy workes, wisedome, and merits puffe thee vp. Here all reioycing is taken away, that he that reioyceth, may reioyce in the Lord, as Paule sayth 1. Cor. 1. It followeth moreouer in the Gospell:

Ver. 27. All things are giuẽ vnto me of my Father: & no man knoweth the Sonne but the Father: neither knoweth any mã the Father but the Sõne, and he to whom the Sonne will reueale him.

Here thou seest the safetie, which is in the kingdome of Christ, by whom we haue knowledge and light. If therefore Christ holdeth all thinges in his hand, and hath power ouer all thinges as the Father hath, no man can plucke any thing out of his handes, which he himselfe also witnesseth in Iohn: I giue eternall life to my sheepe, and they shall neuer perish, neither shall any plucke them out of my hand: my Father which gaue them me, is greater then all, and none is able to take them out of my Fathers hand. I and my Father are one. Wherefore euery Christian, when he hath receiued the Gospell, may worthely reioyce, that he is now vnder the tuition of Christ, and is not any thing troubled because of his synnes. If he hath embraced the Gospell, Christ vnder whom he fighteth will guide the matter excellently well. Satan in deede will tempt him with this and

Ioh. 10. 28.

Christians haue cause to reioyce although they be diuers wayes assailed of Satan,

for that they be vnder the tuition of Christ, who will defend and preserue them.

that vice, as, with adulterie, whoredome, theft, slaughter, enuie, hatred, wrath, and other like synnes. But let him not therefore be discouraged, he hath a king, that is strong & mightie enough, of whom he shalbe easily defended. Notwithstanding it wilbe verie hard to stand stronglie, and nothing to yeelde, wherefore prayer in this case is verie needefull, others also may by their prayers intreat for thee that a stout corage and manly heart may be giuen vnto thee, to withstand Satan. But it is certaine, that thou shalt not be destitute, Christ will easily preserue thee, be not disquieted in mynde, let it onely be thy care, that thou fallest not from his kingdome. Moreouer in this Gospell thou seest, that Christ is both God & man: Man, inasmuch as he prayseth God, and giueth him thankes: God, inasmuch as all thinges are giuen vnto him of the Father. Which ought to be great comfort vnto vs in all things that do trouble and afflict vs. Whereas he saith: No man knoweth the Sonne but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father but the Sonne, and he to whom the Sonne will reueale him: he in these wordes ouerthroweth free will, which will know God and Christ, when and how it pleaseth it. Here thou hast plainly, from whence the knowledge of God and of Christ is: the Father, saith he, knoweth the Sonne, and the Sonne the Father, but how do we know, by this or that preacher? no truly, these are onely certaine midle instruments, but he onely knoweth, to whom the Sonne will reueale. A litle before he saide that the Father doth reueale or open, here he attributeth the same to the Sonne. Surely both the Father and the Sonne do reueale, and as the Father reuealeth, so also doth the Sonne: and Christ also sayth in Iohn chap. 14: The holy Ghost shall teach you all thinges. Wherefore as the Father teacheth, so teacheth the Sonne, likewise also teacheth the holy Ghost. And where God the Father, and the Sonne, and the holy Ghost do not teach, there all thinges remaine voide of knowledge. It followeth moreouer in the Gospell.

Verse 28. Come vnto me all ye that are wearie and laden, and I will refresh you.

Verse 29. Take my yoke on you, and learne of me: for I am meeke and lowly in heart: and ye shall finde rest vnto your soules.

Verse 30.

Verse 30. For my yoke is easie, and my burden is light.

Hitherto we haue heard how the Lord dealeth with the wise and prudent, namely that he blyndeth them, and hideth the Gospell from them. Likewise how he is delighted in children and simple ones, to wit, that he endueth them with right knowledge of himselfe, and openeth the Gospell vnto them. But some man may here say and complaine: If the matter be so, surely my conscience shalbe in great daunger, before I heare and know that the Gospell bothe pertaine vnto me. I am a wretched synner, and perhaps the Gospell pertaineth not vnto me, what if I be vnworthie? Christ, that he may comfort these weake, dismayed, and troubled consciences, sayth: Come vnto me all ye that are wearie and laden, and I will refresh you. Here are we called vnto comfort. Here forget all thy merit and worthines, for that he plainly sayth: ye that are wearie and laden, to wit, with the burden of the lawe, the anguishe and affliction of synne, and wherewithall soeuer the conscience maye be troubled. Therefore he bothe not expresse it by name: for he sayethe not, ye that are troubled with this or that calamitie, but simplie, ye that are wearie and laden. Neither will he haue any here excluded, forasmuch as he sayethe, All, which is a singular and speciall comfort, if any thinge trouble vs, what kynde of tentation soeuer it be.

What soeuer burden we are laden w, we may finde ease & comfort in christ, if we flie to him for succour.

Who soeuer therefore is striken with the feelinge of his synne, and knoweth his one weakenes to fulfill the lawe of God, let him come hither with a cheerefull and bold corage, and he shall certainly receiue comfort. I will refresh you, sayth Christ, as those that are pressed and burdened with sore labour and griefe. Let this onely be thy care, that thou beleeue such a louing bidding and promise. After this sorte Christ cryed in the temple at Hierusalem at a certaine feast: If any man thirst, let him come vnto me, and drinke. He that beleeueth in me, as sayth the Scripture, out of his bellie shall flow riuers of water of life. This spake he of the Spirit, which they that beleeued in him, should receiue. Which so commeth to passe: He causeth the Gospel to be preached vnto vs, which he that beleeueth, is endued with the holy Ghost, and obtaineth pardon of all his synnes,

Ioh. 7. 37. 38. 39.

This is truly to refresh him, whose conscience is troubled, to wit, when he feeleth that his synnes be forgiuen, and that he is become heire of the kingdome of God. Neither doth he refresh vs onely in the anguish and tentation of synne, but he will also be present with vs in other calamities and miseries, in famine, warre, dearth of victuals, and whatsoeuer such like can come, in all these he will not leaue vs destitute of his helpe, as he cared for the Patriarke Ioseph, euen in a straunge countrie, with whom he was continually present, as well in prosperitie as in aduersitie. Nowe synne is a grieuous burden, whereof no man is eased, but he whom Christ the sonne of God deliuereth, and that by the holy Ghost, whom he hath merited for vs of the Father, which maketh our hearts cheerefull, and readie to do all thinges which God requireth of vs.

But what is this that he sayth? Take my yoke on you. Is this to refresh, if I take one burden from one, and lay vpon him an other? This is that, whereof we haue oftentimes spoken, the Gospell doth first make astonied and discourage, and is grieuous to the flesh, for it telleth vs that all our owne thinges are nothing, that our owne holines and righteousnes are of no importaunce, that all thinges which are in vs are damned, that we are the children of wrath and indignation. This is verie hard, and an intolerable burden to the flesh, and therefore he calleth it a burden or yoke. But lest he should terrifie or make afrayde any, for that he is of great authoritie, high, and mightie, and therefore can not suffer synneful and wretched men, or for that he may seeme to be tyrannicall and vngentle, he before cutting of this suspicion, sayth: Learne of me: for I am meeke and lowly in heart. Christ will here louingly allure vs to his doctrine, for he had spoken before of the knowledge of the Father, as if he would saye: flesh and a fearfull nature compteth me for an austere, seuere, and rigorous man, but I am not of such a nature, yea I am humble and meeke in heart. I do not terrifie men as Moses dothe, I doe not preach: doe this or that, but I preach forgiuenes of synnes, neither doe I preach that they should giue any thinge, but rather that they may receiue. There is not in me ambition and loftines, as is in the Pharises, which desire to be magnified, but I am altogither gentle and lowly in heart, ready to receiue synners. If so be that they fall againe into synnes,

The yoke of Christ why so called.

Christ humble & meeke.

synnes, notwithstanding I doe not yet cast them from me, if they flie vnto me for succour, and doe with a sure confidence looke for comfort and helpe of me. I doe not curse men as the Pharises doe, which curse them euen for their owne ordinaunces, and for mens deuises, and will sooner suffer all the commaundements of God to be neglected, then one of their decrees and ordinaunces not to be obserued. As we see in the Papacie, where it is counted a greater offence to eate flesh on the frydaye, or for a sacrificing Priest to marie, them to commit twentie adulteries or ten homicides. But here thou seest that God doth abrogate euen his owne lawe, that he may so much the sooner procure synners vnto him.

Christ in a singular signification sayth here, that he is meeke, as if he saide: I knowe how synners are to be handled, I haue tryed what a fearefull and an afflicted conscience is, as the Epistle to the Hebreues chapter 5. witnesseth, that he was in all thinges tempted in like sort, except synne. Wherefore let no man be afrayd of me, I will handle all easily and gently, I will saye nothinge with a sowre contenaunce, I make no man afrayde, so as they come boldly vnto me, they shall synde rest to their soules with me. To their soules he sayth, as if he would saye: outwardly in the bodie there maye be affliction and trouble, and calamities may ouerwhelme you, but ye ought to beare all these thinges lightely, as he also sayth to his disciples in the Gospell of John: In me ye shall haue peace, but in the world ye shall haue affliction. Wherefore although outwardly all thinges fall out against vs, as though they would suppresse and deuour vs, yet are they nothinge to be esteemed of: For we haue the feelinge of peace inwardly in our conscience. And this is the first frute of fayth, as Paule sayth Rom. 5: Therefore being iustified by fayth we haue peace toward God through our Lorde Iesus Christ. Nowe when our conscience is quieted, and we haue peace with God, nothinge is able to moue vs, no nothing shall hurt vs, albeit it be euell and against vs.

They that beleeue in Christ finde rest to their soules, though in their bodies they suffer affliction.

Let no man thinke thus, and saye: this is not to amend ones state or case, if I take one burden from his necke, and laye on an other, as it is before sayd. For Christ sayth: My yoke is easie, and my burden is light, as if he would saye: the yoke of the law, vnder which ye liued before, was grieuous to be borne,

but my burden is not so grieuous, it is light, and tolerable, ye may easily beare it. Our wisemen saye now, that the yoke of Christ is more grieuous, then the yoke of the Lawe was, and they alleage the fift chapter of Matthewe. But Christ dothe there interprete the Lawe, how it ought to be vnderstood, he doth not make lawes, but sayth, that murders and adulteries proceede from an euell and vncleane heart. And so he doth onely expounde the Lawe of Moses, and prescribeth not any lawes there. But the yoke of Christ is therefore easie, and his burden light, because he taketh awaye, not onely ceremoniall and mans lawes, but euen the whole lawe, the curse, synne, death, and what soeuer maye come vnto vs from the Lawe, all this Christ taketh awaye from me, and endueth me with his spirit, by the motion and instinct whereof, I doe gladly, willingly and with pleasure performe all the duties of the Lawe. It is therefore also called easie, sweete, and light, for that he himselfe helpeth vs, and taketh part of the burden, if we be not of strength sufficient. It appeareth in deede grieuous and intolerable to the worlde, but it is otherwise when there is one ready to ease the burden. It is a common saying: it is good to sing with a fit compaino, you two will easily beare the burden, although one alone were not of stregth sufficiet to beare it. Thus much shall suffize for the exposition of this Gospell.

Why ỹ yoke of Christ is saide to be easie.

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A SERMON OF D. MARTIN LVTHER VPON THE GOSPELL ON THE FEAST OF S. PHILIP AND IAMES.

Iohn 14.

Verse 1. IEsus said vnto his disciples: Let not your heart be troubled: ye beleeue in God, beleeue also in me.

2. In my Fathers house are manie dwelling places: if it were not so, I would haue tould you: I go to prepare a place for you.

3. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come againe, and receiue you vnto my selfe, that where I am, there may ye be also.

4. And whither I go, ye know, and the waye ye knowe.

5. Thomas said vnto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, how can we then knowe the waye?

6. Iesus said vnto him, I am the Waie, the Truth, and the Life. No man commeth vnto the Father but by me.

7. If ye had knowne me, ye should haue knowne my Father also: and from hence forth ye know him, and haue seene him.

8. Philippe said vnto him, Lord, shew vs thy Father, and it suffiseth vs.

9. Iesus said vnto him: Haue I bin so long time with you, and hast thou not knowne me? Phi-

lip, he that hath ſeene me, hath ſeene my Father: how then ſayeſt thou, Shewe vs thy Father?

10. Beleeueſt thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? The wordes that I ſpeake vnto you, I ſpeake not of my ſelfe, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the workes.

11. Beleeue me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me: at the leaſt beleeue me for the verie workes ſake.

12. Verely, verely I ſay vnto you, he that beleeueth in me, the workes that I do, he ſhall do alſo, and greater then theſe ſhalhe do: for I go vnto my Father.

13. And what ſoeuer ye aske in my Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Sonne.

14. If ye ſhall aske any thing in my name, I will doe it.

The ſumme of this Goſpell.

1 *IN this Goſpell is contained a comfort againſt offence that tempteth vs through the croſſe and perſecution.*

2 *Without the merit of Chriſt no man commeth to glorie. Therefore he ſayth:* In my Fathers houſe are many dwelling places. *For many are elect frō euerlaſting of God the Father, which notwithſtanding can not come vnto glorie without Chriſt.*

3 *The Diſciples beleeued in Chriſt, yet did they not vnderſtād, that he ſhould come vnto glorie by death. Wherein we muſt marke, that fayth being vnperfect in the Apoſtles and Diſciples of Chriſt, is a comfort vnto vs, if we reſt vpon the foundation Chriſt.*

4 *In Philip we ſee a verie groſſe fayth, for he will ſee and know by experience. Wherefore Chriſt ſayth: If ye will not beleeue my wordes, at the laſt beleeue the workes, that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.*

5 *Theſe*

5 *These wordes:* I say vnto you, he that beleeueth in me, the workes that I do, he shall do also, &c. *shew that Christ shall reigne in vs, when he is glorified with the Father.*

6 *And thus we see that in all this Gospell, Christ requireth nothing els of them that be his, but fayth.*

The exposition of this Gospell.

IN the beginning of this Gospell Christ declareth wherefore he came, and what office he executeth, which is properly the preaching of the Gospell: to wit, that he is he which prepareth dwelling places with the Father, and wil when he commeth againe, receiue vs vnto himselfe. Moreouer he sayth, that he is the way, the truth, and the life, which he afterward more plainly expresseth when he sayth: No man commeth vnto the Father but by me. Also when he sayth: If ye had knowne me, ye should haue knowne my Father also. Hereunto moreouer pertaineth that which he sayth vnto Philip: He that hath seene me, hath seene my Father. This is the chiefe and the greatest thing in this Gospell, vnto which all are to be referred. Hereof we ought to learne, that we are not iustified by our owne strength, neither saued by our owne merits, but are sanctified by ꝑ spirit of Christ, and saued by grace, & that Christ is the way leading to saluation.

We will discusse and examine this Gospell throughout, as God shall giue vs grace. These wordes the Lord spake vnto his Disciples after his Supper, when he was now about to depart from them. Forasmuch as he had said many thinges vnto them of his departure and passion, they were after a sort troubled and terrified, wherefore the Lord beginneth louingly to comfort thē, saying: Let not your heart be troubled. As if he would say: I perceiue that my departure dothe grieue you, and that ye are therefore troubled: But seeing it can not be otherwise, be not discomforted, there is no cause why ye should therefore be troubled, I will come againe vnto you. Notwithstanding ye shall see many thinges in me before, whereat ye wilbe offended, they shal crucifie me and vnworthely handle me. But be not ye troubled because of these thinges, be not afrayde, it wilbe better shortly after, the will of the Father is such. Howbeit flesh can not do

otherwise but be offended, if it seeth Christ to be crucified, it by-and-by reuolteth from him, it beleeueth him not neither counteth him for a Sauiour. Which also it doth, when it seeth holy men suffer persecution, to be afflicted and tormented, for then it thinketh that God hath no care of them. Against this offence Christ aforehand confirmeth his Disciples, and sayth: Ye beleeue in God, beleeue also in me. That is, ye beleeue that God loueth you and will glorifie you, beleeue that he will do it after that sort, that ye see me glorified, and beleeue that this my death is like, to the glorifying both of me, and of my whole body, that is, of all Christians, and that this death satisfieth for the synnes of the world, as the Apostles afterward witnessed of him in their wri-
1. Iohn 2.2. tinges. Thus Iohn sayth: Christ is the reconciliation for our synnes: and not for ours onely, but also for the synnes of the whole worlde. Wherefore thou seest that Christ here will haue heartes confirmed by faith, and by no other outward thinge. He sayth moreouer:

In my Fathers house are many dwelling places. These dwelling places haue bin prepared from euerlasting, neither is there any neede that they should be prepared of him. Why therefore doth he say: I go to prepare a place for you? This is nothinge els but that he goeth and is made Lord of all, whereby he may prepare vs vnto such dwelling places. For as long as we are not prepared, neither are the dwelling places prepared for vs, although they be ready by themselues. Wherefore Christ meaneth thus much: There are dwelling places, but not yet prepared rightly and as they must be. Howbeit then shal they be rightly prepared and appointed, whē as I haue taken away the kingdome of death by my death, and am now gone to reigne, and that by the holy Ghost: which by fayth shall prepare and wholy make ready you also vnto such dwelling places. So that this is the simple and plaine meaning of these wordes: There are dwelling places, to wit, where the Father glorifieth, but those dwelling places are not yet prepared, for that the kingdome of death is not yet taken away. This Christ signifieth when he sayth:

If it were not so I would haue told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come againe, and receiue you vnto my selfe, that where I am, there may ye be also. In these wordes the Lord declareth how these dwelling

ling places be prepared, namely, by the death of Christ as it is sayde, by which he came vnto glorie, and ruleth ouer all thinges, which are in heauen and earth. By which death he hath obtayned the holy Ghost for vs, which as is before sayde, may prepare vs vnto these dwelling places. For through his operation and working in vs, he maketh vs beleeue the Gospell, by which beleeuing or faith we are prepared. Which could not be done if Christ should not depart and dye, and so possesse a kingdome ouer all. This therefore is the summe of this text: They are foreseene, whome the Father will glorifie, but they can not be glorified but by Christ, who vnles he take away death and sinne, all shall be in vaine. Here thou seest that all tend vnto this, that Christ is he which prepareth the dwelling places, and that we can not be glorified but by Christ, so that the whole drift of this text is, that we are not iustified by mans strength, nor by our owne merits, but by Christ, which the whole Epistle to the Romanes effectually declareth, as also that which is written to the Galathians, & almost all that Paule doth in his Epistles, tendeth to the same ende. It followeth moreouer:

And whither I goe ye knowe, and the way ye knowe. For ye beleeue in me, and haue shewed signes in my name, whereby ye ought nowe to be certaine who I am, and what I doe, and wherefore I am come. Ye haue also seene and heard the testimonie of the Father of me. Wherefore ye may nowe knowe that the Father will glorifie me, and beleeue that I and the Father are one, it shoulde be therefore superfluous to speake more of these thinges. But the Disciples albeit they were well instructed of the Lorde him selfe, and had seene his miracles, yea and they them selues also had preached the Gospell and wrought miracles, were notwithstanding as yet somewhat grosse in vnderstanding, neither did they perceiue whereof he here spake, and what was that way, and whither the Lorde did prepare to depart. Wherefore Thomas bursteth forth into open wordes and confesseth freely, that he is ignorant hereof, and sayth thus vnto the Lord: Lord we knowe not whither thou goest: howe can we then knowe the way? Here ye heare and see, that albeit there was faith in the Disciples, notwithstanding they were not as yet persuaded that Christ shoulde be crucified, and

by his death shoulde enter into his kingdome, and that the same kingdom should be spirituall, which they did not vnderstand euen
Act.1.6. after the resurrection of the Lord: Lorde, say they, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israell? Those good men were as yet persuaded, that it should be a carnall & worldly kingdom. Such grosse things may here and there be found in the Gospels, by meanes whereof the Disciples did sometime notably stumble and erre. All which were committed to writing for our comfort & confirmation, that we should not be byandby discouraged, when we haue sometime stumbled in faith, and can not at the first apply our selues to the workes and word of the Lorde. If this happened to these great mē, which afterward shoulde become pillers of Christianitie, there is no cause truely that any should meruell, if we also sometime faint in faith, yea, and let no man be afrayd, although it falleth out that sometime through infirmitie he so doe. It is the worke and matter of the Lorde, he will amend these thinges when it seemeth good vnto him.

Comfort for them that be weake in faith and sometime through infirmitie fall.

Now of the wordes we mind to entreate somewhat at large. Not much before, when Christ would confirme his Disciples in faith, he promised them that they should be glorified. Here he addeth and declareth how and by what meanes they must be glorified, affirming that that must be by his departure, that is, by his death, & that by that meane he must obtaine his kingdome. This he had often repeated vnto them, so that now it did become them to know and vnderstand it. Therefore he sayth: VVhither I goe ye know, and the way ye knowe, but they did not yet throughly vnderstand it, as the wordes of Thomas doe declare. Now, it is certaine that there was faith in the Disciples, which the wordes of Peter proue, who aunswered Christ in steede of the rest, when he asked them, whether they also would goe away: Peter sayd:
Ioh.6.68. Maister to whom shall we goe? Thou hast the wordes of eternall life: and we beleeue and knowe that thou art Christ the Sonne of the liuing God. This appeareth also by the wordes of the Lord, which he had sayd to them a litle before at his supper: Ye are cleane, which he would not haue sayd, if they had not beleeued; they knewe Christ therefore that he is the way to the Father. So they knew the Father also, for that they had seene the miracles whereby he gaue testimonie of the Sonne, and had heard the voyce of the Father from heauen: This is my beloued

Sonne,

Sonne, in whom I am well pleased heare him. All these thinges did greatly increase faith in the Disciples hearts, notwithstanding they did not yet vnderstand, what they should doe, and what ende concerning the matters of Christ was to be hoped for.

Set before you an example hereof in Abraham. Although in faith a sonne was conceiued vnto him, neuertheles he was yet ignorant, that he must be offered: Neither did faith manifestly shew it selfe, when a sonne was giuen vnto him. So was it also with the Disciples: although they had faith, notwithstanding they wanted as yet triall of their faith: Now nothing trieth faith better then the crosse and persecution. If Abraham had not bene commaunded to offer his sonne, he had had no triall of his faith. When as the Apostles did suffer persecution, they then had a tast and triall of their faith. As longe as we may liue without tentation, we thinke that we are endued with a strong faith, but if any aduersitie commeth to vs on any side, we byandby trie what faith we rested vpon. Wherfore S. Paul sayth Rom. 5: We reioyce in tribulations, knowing that tribulation bringeth forth patience, & patience experience, & experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed. After the same sort Salomon also sayth in the Prouerbs: As siluer is fined, and golde tryed in the fornace, so doth the Lord trie the harts. Pro. 17. 3. Such a triall is made by ỹ crosse and persecution, when we are as it were crucified according to our old Adam, by which crucifying our faith is tried, and according to this trial of faith our flesh mortified, the spirit encreasing in the knowledge of Christ. And then is our flesh truely mortified, when we suffer the will of God to beare rule in vs, which is then done when we submit our selues to his will howsoeuer he dealeth with vs, renouncing our owne. This S. Paule will haue vs to doe, when he sayth thus Rom. 12: I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God, that ye giue vp your bodies a liuing sacrifice, holy, acceptable vnto God, which is your reasonable seruing of God. And fashiō not your selues like vnto this world, but be ye chaunged by the renuing of your minde, that ye may proue what that good, and acceptable, and perfect vvil of God is.

When Thomas thus confesseth that he is ignorant whither the Lord goeth, neither knoweth the way, the Lord doth not rebuke him with a sterne countenance, neither by and by casteth

him of, nor driueth him frō him, he calleth him not either a grosse asse or oxe, as we are wont to handle the weake, but aunswering him very gently, sayth: I am the vvay, the truth, and the life. I, sayth the Lord, am the way, by which the father is gone vnto, albeit I be slayne: I cary them that beleeue and are my sheepe, on my shoulders to the Father: no other way beside this leadeth vnto heauen. He that walketh not this way, goeth out of the way from the Father. I also am the truth. For I am the light which lightneth the worlde, and I teach true doctrine, and make true Christians. Moreouer, I also am the life, for it is I that quicken, he that beleeueth in me shall not dye. This, as I sayd before, is to teach the Gospell rightly, that is, to shew the true and right way, which leadeth vnto eternall life. When the Disciples knew not the way that leadeth vnto glory, the Lorde making no delay, affirmeth vnto them that he is that way. As if he should say: If ye desire to know the way to glory, seeke not the strength, light, and righteousnes of creatures, but looke vnto me: for I am the way, the truth, and the life, although I must be put to death, although I am vile and of no reputation according to the outward appearance: neither let this offend you, that they which be mine, are subiect to persecutions. The right way to the father is found in me, let none remoue you from this perswasion. Therefore he sayth moreouer:

Christ the way, the truth, and the life.

No man commeth vnto the Father but by me. As if he should say: No man can come to the Father by his owne strength or merits: The lawe terrifieth the conscience that it can not goe to the Father: the word of Christ, which iustifieth vs by the righteousnes of Christ, bringeth vs to the Father. Whereupon followeth that which he afterward sayth:

If ye had knovvne me, ye should haue knovvne my Father also. For as no man commeth to the Father, but by the Sonne, so no man knoweth the Father but by Christ the Sonne. First the Fathers will is not knowne, to wit, that he wil saue vs, vnles we see it in Christ. He which is in the bosom of the Father, hath reuealed it vnto vs. Secondly the Father is not beleeued. For reason by it selfe doth not vnderstand, that it receiueth any thing of God. Wherefore it is needefull that Christ declare that bountifulnes and goodnes vnto vs. A troubled conscience flieth the Father, neither can it abide to commit it selfe vnto him. But they that

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are iustified by the worde of Christ, do not any more contemne the Father, neither flie him, as the Israelites did, but stande before him as Moses, and are enlightened with diuine light, that they may know the power of God and mercie of the Father. Hereupon commeth trust and confidence in him: hereby we knowe that we receiue all thinges at his handes, and looke for all as well spiritual as corporal things of him. All these we must acknowledge to be receiued by faith, reason can not attaine vnto them. For it endeuoureth to obtaine God by her owne strength and merits, but that endeuour is in vaine. Wherefore when it is not able to come to the knowledge of God by her owne strength, it vtterly denieth God, and sayth that there is no God. After when it seeth vncleannes in her workes, it despeireth, and is in most great distres. But when we are iustified by foolish preaching, we come to the knowledge of God the Father, as soone as we beleeue the worde of Christ, and so we trie the power of the Father in afflictions and aduersities, although they be euen great. This was shadowed forth in that, that the people of Israell could not abide to heare the voice of God, but desired that Moses might speake vnto them. Where Christ also was figured, that he should make intercession for vs to the Father, and be our mercy seat. For nature is more weake & fraile, then that it can abide to talke with God. Wherefore he hath giuen vnto vs this his Sonne a Mediatour, in whom and by whom we must haue to doe with him. When as the Lord so louingly and gently dealeth with Thomas, and sheweth vnto him, howe he must come to the Father, to wit, by the Sonne, and that the Father is knowne in the Sonne, there doth yet happen a grosser thing in Philip, who bursteth forth and will not be content with faith, but will knowe the thinge assuredly by feeling and seeing. Wherefore he sayth vnto the Lord:

Lord, shew vs thy Father, and it sufficeth vs. As though he would say, if thou wilt also shew vnto vs a signe, then will we beleeue. Philip counteth it not sufficient to beleeue the worde, but goeth about to come to the knowledge of the Father by an other meanes then by the worde. For seing that reason can not beleeue, he requesteth to be certified by an other meanes and way. By the interrogation therfore of Christ that followeth it is shewed, that the conscience is made certaine and quiet by no other thing, then by faith, for that we must cleaue to the bare worde, and looke for

no other signe. But Philip thought here that he should be much more certified, if he did see the Father, then if he beleeued the simple and bare word. This incredulitie Christ reproueth somewhat sharpely, and sayth:

Haue I bene so long time with you, & hast thou not knowne me? As though he should say: I teach and preach, and yet thou knowest me not. Doost thou not knowe that the Father will be knowne by me, that my word is the worde and power of the Father, by which alone he will be knowne, and by nothing els? For thou hast heard the voice of the Father from heauen after this sort: This is my beloued Sonne, in whome I am well pleased, heare him. Doost thou not yet vnderstande howe the Father is knowne? The Father is not seene with carnall eyes, as Iohn in his first chapter sayth: No man hath seene God at any time: the onely begotten Sonne, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. Wherefore the Lord sayth to Philip: Philip, he that hath seene me, hath seene the Father. This saying is like vnto that former when he sayth: If ye had knowne me, ye should haue knowne my Father also. That is, forasmuch as the Father will be knowne by me, seeke no other way to knowe him, but beleue my word, that I am he, which sheweth vnto you the Father, and will make you to know him in me. Beleeue that by me thou hast accesse to the Father, by this meanes thou shalt knowe the Father, by faith thou shalt vnderstande the power and mercie of the Father, and shalt feele him to be comfortable and gracious. The Father will haue my word to be beleeued, and them that beleeue it, to be saued and obtaine eternall life. Seeing therefore that these thinges be thus, that we can not know the Father but in the Sonne, and when we know the Sonne, we know also the Father: the Lord sayth moreouer vnto Philip:

Ioh. 1. 18.

How then sayest thou: Shewe vs thy Father? Beleeuest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? As if he would say: Forasmuch as there is no other way to knowe the Father, but that which I haue shewed, why I pray thee, doost thou not beleeue my wordes, seeing that I haue taught that I am the way, the truth, and the life? Doost thou not beleeue that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? Beleeuest thou not that my diuinitie and the diuinitie of the Father is one? and that the Father will be knowne by me? But why is the Father knowne by

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the knowledge of the Sonne? euen therefore, for that the Sonne is in the Father, and the Father in the Sonne. For the word by which the Sonne is knowne, is the power of the Sonne and of the Father. Wherefore seing the Sonne is knowne by his word, it necessarily followeth, that the father also is knowne thereby.

Beleeue me, that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me: at the least beleeue me for the very works sake. Here he doth as it were appeale to workes, that they may giue testimonie of the word. As if he should say: Seeing that ye can not be content to beleeue the word, at the least beleeue the signes which beare witnes of the word, and whereby the Father hath giuen testimonie of me. For the works and signes are testimonies of the word. By these words Christ meaneth nothing els but to confirme the consciences of his Disciples, and of all vs against the offence of the crosse. For consciences wil know and not beleeue the bare words of God, but doe alwayes dout and say: What if God careth not for thee? and haue such like cogitations. Holy & godly men seeme for the most part to be neglected, as abiects and most contemptible men, inasmuch as the world according to the will & lust thereof, rageth and practiseth tyrannie against them, and doth almost what it list. Hereupon they are in anguish & in daunger of faith, & desire to know the will of God toward them. These Christ comforteth, that they may seeke no other comfort but in him and in his death, and beleue that he is life, that he beareth rule, and maketh aliue them that be dead. And that they should nothing dout hereof, he maketh them yet more certaine, and sayth:

Verely, verely I say vnto you, he that beleeueth in me, the vvorkes that I doe, he shall doe also, and greater then these shall he doe. As if he should say: Dout not any thing but that ye shall know the Father by me, and that my word is the power of God, & that by my word ye shal be sustained, although I be euen crucified. Ye shall haue triall hereof in your selues, for if ye beleeue in me, ye shall not onely worke such workes and shew such signes as I doe, but euen greater. Which came to passe after the ascention of Christ, when the Apostles wrought greater miracles as well among the Iewes as Gentiles, then Christ him selfe. But what is the cause hereof? The Lord him selfe addeth it saying:

For I goe vnto my Father. That is, I will begin a kingdom, where I will fulfill all thinges. Here the Lord annexeth the con-

clusion of all the questions and consolations going before. For a litle before Christ had taught, that the Father is known by him, and that is because he is in the Father, he therefore is shewed by that worde, by which the Father is shewed. But that he might confirme this, to wit, that his worde is the power of the Father, he added and sayd: He that beleeueth in me, the works that I do, he shall doe also. That is, by faith in me ye also shall doe those workes, and know that my word is the vertue and power of God. But why doth he say: I goe to the Father? I aunswere: Because Christ is in the Father, therefore doth he the workes of the Father, but we doe them not also therefore, but for that Christ who is in the Father, is now in vs. For to goe to the Father is to fulfill all thinges, & as Paule according to the saying of the Psalme declareth, to giue giftes vnto men, to lighten and to sanctifie. For this is the kingdom of Christ, whereby he reigneth in earth in the hartes of the beleeuers, and sitteth vpon the throne of his Father Dauid. The Lord also speaketh these wordes: I goe to the Father, to comfort his Disciples. For as he did before beginne to confirme them, that they should not be troubled and offended, although he should dye, but courageously cleaue to him, and beleue in him: So here he promiseth them that they shall be glorified, for he goeth to the Father, who shall deliuer all thinges into his handes, that he may mightely obtaine a kingdom ouer all things that are in heauen and earth. Wherefore they ought nothing at all to feare. He yet comforteth them more and sayth:

And whatsoeuer ye aske in my name, that will I doe. As if he should say: As soone as I come to the Father, there is no cause why ye should be carefull. For those thinges that ye haue neede of and aske, ye shall obtaine, I wil doe this for you, because I obtaine a kingdom. And he peculiarly addeth, in my Name, whereby he excludeth all our merits. For by Christ we are heard, also in Christ we are loued, by whom also we are Priestes, as Peter sayth, to offer vp spirituall sacrifices, and acceptable to God. All these thinges sayth Christ, I will doe for this cause:

That the Father may be glorified in the Sonne. The Father is then glorified, when glorie is giuen and ascribed vnto him, not vnto vs. That is, whē we acknowledge ẏ we are saued not by our owne merits, not by our owne wisedom and righteousnes, but do put our trust in his mercie. For he hath giuen his Sonne for our sinnes,

sinnes, and whatsoeuer we purpose to aske, we must aske it by this Sonne, and we shall obtaine it. Wherefore he repeateth these wordes, and sayth:

If ye shall aske any thing in my Name, I will doe it. These wordes tend to this ende, that he may make vs certainely beleue his wordes, and cleaue vnto him. This therefore is the summe of this conclusion: He biddeth his Disciples and vs therefore beleeue, for that he goeth to reigne. Before he affirmeth, that he wil shew forth a signe and testimonie of his kingdom, & so reigne, that he will declare a notable token of his gouernment, that we may feele and perceiue it: to wit, that he will doe so great workes by vs, as he him selfe hath done, yea and greater also. Also, that he will heare vs when we pray, and whatsoeuer we pray for vnto the Father in his name. By these promises the hart must be confirmed & made courageous against the gates of hell. For Christ reigneth by his word, wherefore it is needefull that we exactly know the vertue of the word: for the kingdom of Christ is the power & vertue of God. These things I thought good to entreat of concerning this Gospell: Let vs call vpon God for the ayde of his grace, that we may be able to vnderstand them, & by them to strengthen our weake faith.

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3 Shillings
and
6 pence

Jesus loves my worthless Soul
Lord make me love the more
My name was graven on thy breast
When drenched in sweat and Gore

My melting heart like wax is made
Impress thine Image there
Thou Lord hast seald me for thine own
And cast out slavish fear

Hallelujah

LUTHER (Martin)

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FIRST EDITION. Preceding the work is a preface by John Foxe, the martyrologist.